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ABSTRACT

The foreign and international studies section of the proceedings includes the following 11 papers: "The Role of Culture in Development Communication Research and the Use of Ethnography in Development Communication Project Planning" (Jeff Merron); "A Catechism for Censorship: The Development of Circular Number 1000 in World War I France" (Ross F. Collins); "Conflictive News Coverage and Public Salience of Foreign Nations" (Michael B. Salwen and Frances Matera); "Political Commentary in Cuban Broadcasting, 1959-1960" (Michael B. Salwen); "Cultivation Analysis: The Case of Violence in the World of Korean Television Drama" (Jong G. Kang and Shin S. Kang); "Expanding News Flow in the South Pacific" (Robert L. Stevenson); "King Wachirawut of Thailand (1910-1925): A Pioneering Use of Media to Promote Nationalism" (Stephen L. W. Greene); "Portrayal of the United States in the Newspapers of the People's Republic of China" (Roy E. Blackwood); "A Comparative Study of Communication and Social Integration in Development" (Paul Siu-nam Lee); "A New Voice against Apartheid: South Africa's Alternative Press" (Gordon S. Jackson); and "The South African Press and the State of Emergency: An Assessment" (Gordon S. Jackson). (SR)

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The Role of Culture
in Development Communication Research
and the Use of Ethnography
in Development Communication Project Planning

by Jeff Merron

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A paper accepted by the Qualitative Studies Division for the AEJMC Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 1990. The author is in the Ph.D. Program in Mass Communication Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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"Communication...is not like hypnotism where the receiver automatically and necessarily does what he is told. On the other hand, the receiver is not entirely free to interpret the messages he receives as he might wish. He is partly victim of the residue of expectations from his past exposure to messages, their tokens, and the imagery they have created in him. And he is partly constrained by the rules of the communication system in which the message is couched."[1]

The intersection between development communication and culture has been largely unexplored. This has unfortunately resulted in inadequate development communication theories, which have possibly resulted in injury to traditional and local cultures in the developing world. In this paper I will argue that culture must be a primary factor in research for and implementation of development communication projects, and that the "culture factor" is best understood by the use of ethnographic techniques. By viewing "development as a dynamic process in which culture actively accepts, rejects, and directs change, while at the same time retaining a certain degree of continuity" project planners can have a greater chance of success, and academic researchers will be able to get a fuller understanding of the role of mass communication in the development process.[2]

The neglect of culture in development project planning is rooted in the history of development communication theory. I will review the "old paradigm" of development communication formulated in the 1950s and 1960s by Daniel Lerner, Wilber Schramm, and others. The old paradigm is notable for focusing its attention on the individual as an agent of change. Modernization of nations, it was argued, would result when individuals became modern. Schramm, Lerner, and other researchers traditionally used survey research as the basis for their theories, and used little or no ethnography. Next I will explore alternatives to the old paradigm presented in the 1970s. The New World Information Order provided a sweeping Marxist analysis of development communication and the useful concept of

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[1] Gordon C. Whiting, "How Does Communication Interface with Change?," in Everett M. Rogers, ed., *Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 107-108.

[2] Georgette Wang and Wimal Dissanayake, "Culture, Development, and Change: Some Explorative Observations," in Georgette Wang and Wimal Dissanayake, eds, *Continuity and Change in Communication Systems: An Asian Perspective* (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1984), p. 3.

"cultural imperialism." It was also useful for providing an alternative to the dominant "top-down" development project structures. The contingency approach, also formulated in the 1970s, presented specific guidelines for development communication projects.

Throughout I will outline the strengths and weaknesses of these methods and theories, with an eye toward the third section. There I discuss the theory and practice of ethnography, arguing that it allows us to study the societies where development projects are implemented on the cultural and societal levels that are largely missed by previous approaches. The few ethnographic studies focusing on mass communication will be reviewed as examples of the role the ethnographic approach can play in development communication research.

Daniel Lerner and the 'Old Paradigm' of Development Communication

In the 1950s and 1960s, many social scientists studied social development from different points of view. During this time, conventions for analysis of development were set into what's now called the "old paradigm." The old paradigm is summarized in the following chart.[3]

APPROACH	ATTRIBUTES	ARTICULATORS
1. Historical	Emphasis on broad historical evolution and movement toward modernization	Black (1966)
2. Psychological	Relationship between modernization and psychological traits	Lerner (1958), McClelland (1961)
3. Economic	Modernization analyzed in terms of economic development	Rostow (1960), Hagen (1968)
4. Structural	Emphasis on structural components such as bureaucracies	Parsons (1964), Einsenstadt (1966, 1973)
5. Value-centered	Focus on values in the modernization process	Pye and Verba (1965)

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[3] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Daniel Lerner's viewpoint was only one of many that made up the old paradigm, but it includes many elements of the aproaches listed above and it was the most cricital in the formation of development communication theory. Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society*, published in 1958, laid a strong foundation for work on development communication that followed. In that work, Lerner identified five keys to modernization: urbanization, literacy, a developed mass media, higher participation in a cash-based economy, and increased political participation.[4] Along with Walter Rostow and Wilbur Schramm, Lerner played a key role in stressing that per capita income, education, a developed mass media, movement toward democracy, and increased urbanization stimulated each other and moved naturally together on the road toward modernization.[5]

According to Lerner, individual thought and action were critical to the modernization process. Modernization was, by definition, a move toward something better than the traditional world of the less developed countries. In order to *want* something better, the individual had to be able to envision himself in a different position than the one he was currently in. Modern individuals make a country modern, Lerner argued. To become modern, the individual had to have empathy, or the ability to see himself in another's place. Naturally, he would have to come into contact with people from different cultures, or modern cultures. In the past, this type of contact could only happen through travel. By the 1950s, mass media like radio and television provided a real alternative to travel.[6]

Lerner's theory also had elements of technological determinism. He and others considered the growth of a cash-based economy critical for development. Rich nations were developed, poor ones were not. Measures of gross national product (GNP) and per capita income were viewed as adequate indicators of modernization. "Alternative measures and definitions of development had relatively few proponents."[7] Because the economies of developed nations were driven by advanced industrial technology, it seemed logical that the less developed countries simply needed technology to become developed. Democracy, capitalism, and other "modern" social structures, it was assumed, would naturally follow. "When the needed social structures did not always materialize in less developed countries, the fault was accorded to 'traditional' ways of thinking, beliefs, and social values."[8]

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[4] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958); S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Changing Vision of Modernization and Development," in Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner, eds., *Communication and Change: The Last Ten Years -- and the Next* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 34.

[5] Wilbur Schramm, "End of an Old Paradigm?," in Schramm and Lerner, p. 45-46.

[6] Robert L. Stevenson, *Communication, Development, and the Third World: The Global Politics of Information* (New York and London: Longman Inc., 1988), p. 21; Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*.

Lerner's idea of "empathy" did not simply place the responsibility for development on the individual; it also fixed blame, both on the less developed nations and their citizens. Change was slowed by the traditional ways of the peasant, their fatalistic outlook, and their unresponsiveness to new technologies. Less developed countries were faulted for their large, inefficient bureaucracies, unequal land distribution, etc.[9] Unfortunately, early development communication theory underestimated the strength not only of traditional and indigenous cultures and social structures, but also the political structures that grew out of them.

The role of communication in development was fixed, early on, by the notions of empathy and individual blame. The mass media were seen as potentially explosive tools; like a vaccine, the ideas and attitudes needed for development could be injected with the "hypodermic needle" of the mass media. So powerful and uniform were media affects assumed to be (despite the lack of empirical evidence that indicated such affects) that UNESCO, in 1960, said that in order for normal growth to occur, a country required 100 daily newspapers, 50 radios, 20 televisions, and 20 cinema seats per 1000 people.[10]

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[7] Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm," in Rogers, *Communication and Development*, p. 122.
[8] Ibid., p. 123.
[9] Ibid., p. 127.
[10] Gloria D. Feliciano, "Communication and Development in Southeast Asia, 1964-1974," in Schramm and Lerner, p. 192.

Qualitative aspects of the media and important cultural conditions were subsumed beneath these easily measurable criteria.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the media were generally viewed by development experts as a minor aspect of the development process. Communications scholars were more hopeful about the positive effects mass communication could have. Gradually it became clear that most development projects were failing to achieve their goals, despite their emphasis on disseminating development messages through the mass media. It didn't take long before the idea that mass media's role in development "was often indirect and only contributory, rather than direct and powerful" became predominant.[11]

Communications researchers still believed that mass media could play an important role. The transfer of western media technology to the developing countries was critical for promoting literacy, improved agricultural practices, health, sanitation, birth control, etc. Telecommunications were also seen as vital to a development infrastructure. "All the efforts were supposed to be tied together as the core of a nation's leap toward modernization."[12]

The End of the Old Paradigm and the Beginning of the 'New World Information Order'

By the mid-1970s, it was clear that development efforts had often perpetuated stagnation, widened the gap between rich and poor, increased unemployment, and done little to alleviate food shortages in the developing nations. Many blamed the old paradigm for these failures. It came to be seen as a useful descriptive model of past Western development rather than a prediction or prescription for development in the Third World.[13] Some believed that the often firmly entrenched social and political structures of less developed countries were the real barrier to development efforts. Information was necessary but not sufficient to induce change. Writes Hornik, "There was a strong argument (and some evidence) that people failed to heed advice from outside not because of personal fatalism or traditionalism but because they were structurally bound to current practice."[14]

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[11] Rogers, "Communication and Development," p. 135.

[12] Stevenson, p. 56.

[13] Wang and Dissanayake, p. 12.

Around this time arguments about the role of mass communication for social and economic development in the Third World were superseded by a heated, lengthy, and often repetitive debate over the "New World Information Order:"

> The phrase new world information order...was shorthand for the complex arguments over the purpose of mass media as well as the efforts to promote communication development in the Third World. The phrase linked the information debate to a companion Unesco debate over the inequitable distribution of the world's economic resources. That debate had produced a Unesco declaration on a new world economic order in 1975 that called for a redistribution of economic resources as a matter of reparation for the exploitation of much of the Third World by colonial powers in earlier centuries. The new world information order called for a similar redistribution of information and communication resources for similar reasons.[15]

The NWIO was, to a large degree, a call for a shift in the development power structure from First World to Third World elites. Although the debate over the New World Information Order was largely a political one, it was useful because it brought attention to the fact that development efforts had historically been initiated by the developed nations, with little regard given to the real needs of the developing world. Many development communications researchers began to realize that the planning stages of development projects very rarely included the rural poor they were supposed to benefit. The NWIO also elevated the notion that the concept of development was a cultural construct and that "as a society modernizes, its members' patterned activity, language, use of artifacts, and world view tend to become more similar to other 'developed' nations of the world."[16] In short, the importance of culture and the role of communications in cultural change slowly gained acceptance as important factors in the development process.

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[14] Robert C. Hornik, *Development Communication: Information, Agriculture, and Nutrition in the Third World,* (White Plains, New York: Longman, 1988), p. 156.

[15] Stevenson, p. 43.

[16] George A. Barnett et al., "Communication and Cultural Development: A Multidimensional Analysis," *Human Organization* 40:4 (1981), p. 330.

Most of the development scholars of the 1950s and 1960s believed in the tradition-modernity dichotomy that implies that in order to reach the goal of a "modern" economy, traditional ways must be left behind. This unilinear view ignored some obvious success stories of development, like Japan, where traditional culture was creatively merged with the industrial economy.[17] Some scholars saw the reliance on the largely undefined tradition-modernity dichotomy as simply a major misconception -- that coming "in with the new" was best served by quickly going "out with the old." It became obvious in the 1970s that "disintegration of cultural tradition did not always lead to smooth transitions to modernity."[18] In some cases, the result was chaos and disorganization rather than peaceful and orderly growth.

The Role of Cultural Imperialism

Advocates of a New World Information Order, however, viewed this theory gap as a major factor in an extremely harmful and insidious process they called "cultural imperialism." Cultural imperialism is a somewhat amorphous concept, because it is part of a process of economic imperialism -- systematic domination of underdeveloped nations by economically advanced ones. *Key Concepts in Communication* defines it as

> the ways in which the transmission of certain products, fashions and styles *from* the dominant nations *to* the dependent markets leads to the creation of particular patterns of demand and consumption which are underpinned by and endorse the cultural values, ideals and practices of their dominant origin. In this manner the local cultures of developing nations become dominated and in varying degrees invaded, displaced and challenged by foreign, often western cultures.[19]

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[17] Wang and Dissanayake, p. 8.

[18] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[19] Tim O'Sullivan, et. al., eds., *Key Concepts in Communication* (New York and London: Metheun, 1983), p. 62.

The mass media are a key agent in this process. It has been systematically documented that films, pop music, television programming, and news tend to flow in one direction -- from a relatively small group of large media companies in the developed world to the underdeveloped world. While the United States is clearly the source of much of this cultural content, some countries in the developing world, specifically Brazil and India, now also export a great deal of programming and may be becoming significant agents of cultural imperialism themselves.

A major assumption in the concept of cultural imperialism is that those on the receiving end -- governments, television stations and cable operators, and individuals -- are defenseless against the media barrage, forced for economic and political reasons to watch, listen to, and read the unwanted messages.[20] "In this view, Western television programs are imposed by a combination of aggressive salesmanship on the part of production companies and seductive offers of tied aid and assistance from the exporting countries."[21] Some, notably Schiller and Nordenstreng, argue that there is a conscious effort on part of American industry and government to promote "a one-way flow of American values" in order to advance American political and commercial interests.[22]

One researcher has found that producing a program locally in the Philippines costs about the same as importing a popular program from the United States -- but with the local program there is a big risk, while the imported program is a proven hit elsewhere.[23] The difficulties of producing programming also pose a problem in simply *filling* the daily schedule. Prices for imported American programs charged to stations in developing countries are remarkably low: in 1980, half-hour episodes were going for $150-$200 in Thailand, $130-$150 in Korea and $225-$260 in Hong Kong. In contrast, Japan paid between $3,000-$3,500 for the same programming. These prices reflect the number of sets in use and are also a function of what programs other countries in the same area are buying.[24] It clearly takes much less effort to simply import programming, even if the capabilities for producing quality local programming are present.

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[20] Douglas A. Boyd, "Third World Pirating of U.S. Films and Television Programs from Satellites," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 32:2 (Spring 1988), p. 152.

[21] Orly S. Mercado, "Media imperialism in Philippine Television," *Media Asia* 8:2 (Spring 1981), p. 95.

[22] Ibid., p. 94.

[23] Ibid., p. 97.

The assumed result of cultural imperialism is that the people no longer have a chance to get control over their own lives, because not only are ideas imposed upon them from without, but intracultural communication is also stunted. Many channels are filled with foreign programming, and those open to indigenous programming are heavily influenced by the invading cultural constructs.[25]

There are several counterarguments. One is that American television programming is pervasive simply because it is of technically high quality and often contains simple story lines, familiar characters, lots of action, and predictable outcomes that have a universal appeal.[26] In addition, the local populations retain a great deal of control over their culture, and are led by the traditional elite into the media age. Mass media spur and facilitate change "by providing information as well as the disposition to accommodate change and often to seek it out."[27] On a deeper level, however, very specific cultural values and meanings are built into technology itself. Wrote Margaret Mead, "the technologies and inventions of modern science are themselves the outgrowth of a very particular historically limited type of culture--a culture in which the focus of interest has been upon the observable, the repeatable, the measurable, upon using the external world as a model even when processes within the body were concerned."[28]

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[24] Ibid., p. 95.

[25] Stevenson, p. 32 writes, "Rogers attempted a new definition of development itself, [arguing that] development should emphasize the idea of control: people getting control of their own lives."

[26] Mercado, p. 95.

[27] Stevenson, p. 116.

[28] Margaret Mead, *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change* (New York: Mentor, 1955). Quoted in Wang and Dissanayake, p. 10.

The debate over cultural imperialism continues, and is important because it brings to the forefront the importance of culture in the process of change. The communications technology utilized by a culture and the culture's "content" were recognized as inseparable parts of a complex whole. Even traditional cultures are now recognized as dynamic and adaptive. While New World Information Order advocates were concerned that the new technologies would exploit this adaptability as a weakness, others saw it as a strength. The real problem with many of the arguments surrounding the concept, though, was simply a lack of understanding. The discussions of cultural imperialism were dominated by western viewpoints from Marxists, capitalists, and Third World educated elites. Economics, markets, and individual psychology were the terms of the argument, but few considered what was actually happening, culturally, in the villages of underdeveloped countries.

The New Paradigm

The obvious failure of most development projects, especially large-scale ones, has forced a radical reevaluation of what development really means, who it is for, and the role of mass communication in development. In the face of rapid environmental degradation many question the basic concept of using GNP or per capita income as indicators of development, because "economic growth" implies rapidly accelerating the depletion of scarce natural resources. "Sustainable development" has become a key concept among some development experts.

The definition of development has changed radically since Daniel Lerner first wrote about the role of mass communication in development. The New World Information Order debate has defined a strong alternative that now holds sway among many development communication theorists.

> The key words of the alternative model of development were equity, appropriateness, and independence. By equity they meant that development should emphasize sharing of the nation's resources, however limited they were. The notion of appropriateness was linked to the preservation of traditional cultures and values and particularly to the integration of new

> and mostly western technology into traditional practices so as to avoid the political upheavals and social disruptions that had characterized so much of the first two decades of Third World independence. Finally, independence meant the ability of nations to control their own destinies or simply to exert cultural sovereignty as well as political sovereignty.[29]

Small-scale development projects are now emphasized because they can be adapted more easily to community needs and can be more easily monitored than large-scale ones. Ironically, many are becoming aware that development projects may also be ineffective simply because political and economic structures supported by national governments favor the wealthy few. Because most development programs are implemented via these structures, they in fact serve to unintentionally widen the gulf between the wealthy and the poor and fail to improve the lot of the latter.[30] "Project failure often is not merely a technical failure or a failure of management; rather, technical and management failings may be symptoms of the distribution of power in a society."[31]

In *Development Communication: Information, Agriculture, and Nutrition in the Third World*, Hornik gives an in-depth and far-ranging critique of development communication. Echoing the cultural imperialist argument, he points out that when development communication is used, we must study the "latent functions and dysfunctions" that follow -- unintended effects that may go beyond the program's target audience.[32] He argues that mass communication usually plays an important though supporting role in development:

> We then have four broad classes of potential uses of communication: in the context of rapid environmental change, as a component of a program introducing new resources, as an end in itself, and for purposes of community organization for development...Development programs that do not use communication in one of these ways, no matter how well designed those programs are in a technical sense, have little

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[29] Stevenson, p. 104.

[30] Frances Moore Lappé, Joseph Collins, and David Kinley, *Aid As Obstacle* (San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1981).

[31] Hornik, p. 25.

[32] Ibid., p. 3.

> promise of success. They fail because their theory of the role of communication in development is inadequate.[33]

The availability of resources needed for change is critical to the success of communication projects. "If economic circumstances preclude practice change, or if a recommended change is likely to have a minimal effect on nutritional status, there may be little point in addressing it with education."[34] For example, *The Rising Nepal* urges readers, in a text box next to its masthead, to "Drink Boiled Water." But because of high costs for fuel, frequent shortages, and the time it takes to boil water, this well-intentioned admonition has little effect.[35] Hornik's basic theory of limited though important effects of mass media seems grounded in common sense. More importantly, though, he demonstrates the weaknesses of previous paradigms and theories while building his case for the benefits of a local and bounded role of development communication.

The Contingency Approach

Hornik is joined by some other thoughtful scholars in advocating the view that each individual development project is complex, and many factors must be considered when designing the communication aspects of the program. In reviewing the famous SITE satellite television experiment in India in the mid-1970s, Rogers et al advocate what they call the "contingency approach," which "recognizes the desirable and undesirable impacts of a technology and proposes that these impacts are differentially determined by the context in which the technology is introduced. Technology is both a problem-solver and a problem-generator."[36]

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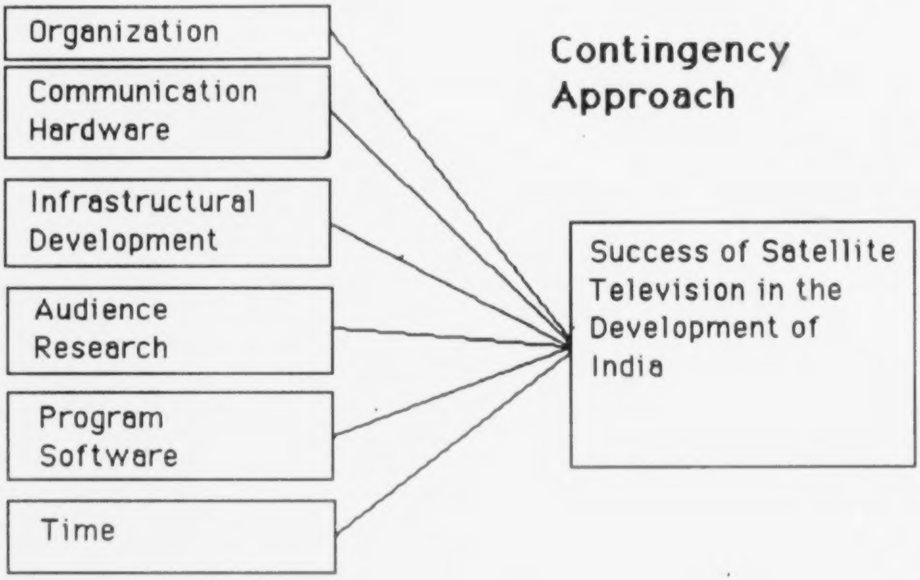
[33] Ibid., p. 17.

[34] Ibid., p. 152.

[35] Personal observation, the author, and Hornik, p. 152.

[36] Noshir S. Contractor, Arvind Singhal, and Everett M. Rogers, "Metatheoretical Perspectives on Satellite Television and Development in India," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 32:2 (1988), p. 131.


Organization
Communication Hardware
Infrastructural Development
Audience Research
Program Software
Time
Contingency Approach
Success of Satellite Television in the Development of India

37

Time is a vital element in the contingency approach that has been largely ignored not only in the implementation of development projects, but also in the assessment of their effectiveness. Hornik points out that most development projects are conceived as "experimental" or "pilot" programs, and few get beyond that stage due to lack of resources. Assessment is sometimes built in to project implementation but rarely continues after the project's initial stages. Studies of satellite television have utilized data gathered just before, during, or right after the project has begun. "The majority of the evaluation research efforts were cross-sectional in design, using data gathered at one point in time, or at best consisting of a single pretest followed by a single posttest."[38]

This is a problem not only with quantitative social science studies, but also with the few ethnographic studies of communication in developing countries. Clearly many projects are intended to have long-lasting effects, but without research funds these effects, both positive and negative, are never known. It is quite possible that when a pilot project is

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[37] Ibid., p. 138.
[38] Ibid, p. 139.

over, the subsequent lack of resources will result in negative effects. The project may have caused significant changes that cannot be supported without the project.

Development Communication Scholarship

Of the several thousand development projects that use mass communication currently functioning, few are succeeding. "Given the available data about audiences reached, practices changed, benefits achieved, and long-term institutional survival, we can assume that most of them fail; they have not reached even a small part of their apparent goals."[39] This seems to indicate a gross failure of development communication theory as well as development communication in practice. With all the debate between advocates of the old paradigm, the New World Information Order, and the western model of mass communication for developing countries, little has really been accomplished.

Few groups of academic scholars are as repetitive as those engaged in the field of development communication. A few interesting ideas have emerged -- the early ones of Lerner and Schramm, the diffusion of innovations theory of Rogers, and those put forth early on by advocates of the New World Information Order -- but many of these ideas have since been discredited.[40] As Stevenson points out, the struggling field of development communication was set back by the New World Information Order debate, which continued through the 1970s and into the 1980s, and still echoes through today. Writes Stevenson, the "debate obscured the real needs of the Third World to improve its media systems. And it also clouded legitimate concerns about the meager and often uninformed attention the Western media paid to the developing world."[41]

Stevenson is rightly disturbed about the strong political polemics which have been allowed to permeate the field. Most "experts" in development communication are either government officials or are dependent on governments for their employment. This makes objective scholarship rare. Even basic textbooks used by undergraduates studying communications in the Third World suffer from a lack of solid academic standards. For example, in *World Communications: A Handbook*, an article entitled "Reaching a Rural Population: A Case Study of Malawi" is included. The title seems innocuous enough, but somehow this piece of propaganda slips in:

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[39] Hornik, p. 14.
[40] Stevenson.
[41] Ibid, p. 44.

> In Malawi, as in other developing countries, the government takes an active interest in the welfare of the community as a whole. The position of the only political party is unique: the Malawi Congress is one of the very few political parties in Africa to have a grass-roots organization. Moreover, its innovative role in socioeconomic development is unequaled. Every party functionary, whether a member of Parliament or a cabinet minister, subscribes to the country's development efforts...Through a hierarchy of committees the party cements the bonds of national unity as an integral part of nation building.[42]

One would have to take time to look at a brief biography at the front of the book to realize that the author is, indeed, a high-level government appointee. Upon discovering this fact, one is tempted to dismiss this passage out of hand. However, it so happens that there is at least a kernel of truth in this passage. Malawi boasts a "President for Life" who has been truly concerned about development for the people since the nation became independent in the 1960s. How do the people feel about their leader? Is he akin to a harsh dictator who rules with an iron fist, or is he more of a benign, wise tribal chief who is loved by his subjects and who loves him back? One would have to know a great deal about Malawin culture to answer these questions, or even to know if they are good questions. However, there has been little such exploration in development communication research to date.

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[42] Hastings Mawola Sanderson Chunga, "Reaching a Rural Population: A Case Study of Malawi," in George Gerbner and Marsha Siefert, eds., *World Communications: A Handbook* (New York and London: Longman, 1984), p. 376.

Ethnographic Studies of Mass Media

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." [43]

Interest in the mass media by anthropologists is a recent phenomenon, and the ethnographic literature is scarce but growing. Modern mass media are relatively new to the underdeveloped nations that many anthropologists study, and anthropologists in general seem to be unsure about how to deal with the topic. One observer notes that the field seems "to be subject to a certain 'cultural lag'" when it comes to media studies.[44] In a similar fashion, mass communication researchers, while generally adept at using data from a diversity of disciplines, have for the most part ignored the small body of ethnography that does exist. The following review of the major studies that have been done reveals the potential of ethnography for development communication research, even though most of the examples are unrelated to development projects.

Planners and academicians, in implementing and assessing the kind of small-scale, localized development communication projects that have the best possibilities of success, would benefit greatly by employing ethnographic methods. Complex, multi-layered analyses can result from ethnographic studies. Current research, both on the practical and theoretical levels, commonly emphasizes quantitative data in determining the effectiveness of development projects. While quantitative studies are necessary, it is critical to use ethnographic techniques to determine not only if the *intended* effects of the projects are being fulfilled, but also to determine the *unintended* effects. Unintentional effects are usually unanticipated, meaning that ways to measure them can not be built in to quantitative studies. By identifying variables and treating them within effects, categorical, or uses and gratifications paradigms, many complex aspects of human interaction are hidden or confused.

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[43] William B. Cameron, *Informal Sociology* (New York: Random House, 1973, p. 13), taken from James Thomas Lull, *Mass Media and Family Communication: An Ethnography of Audience Behavior*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), p. 3.

[44] Robert Peck, "Anthropology and Mass Communications Research," *Sociologus* 17:2 (1967), p. 97.

While clear-cut variables are highly desirable because they are easy to work with, they often tend to miss many important factors in assessing the effects of development communication projects.[45]

Culture is the critical, all-encompassing element missing from the development communication research matrix. One reason for this is that culture is difficult to define and therefore to express or measure quantitatively. Large lending institutions that fund development projects, like the World Bank or the Agency for International Development, are interested in hearing about "concrete" changes in the "standard of living." While measurable variables like GNP, literacy levels, and infant mortality rates are worthwhile and easily communicated in report form, they tell us little about the often significant changes that take place culturally and also on the individual psychological level.

According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, "Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."[46] Geertz points out that even in the most "primitive" cultures there are many layers of meaning that are often invested in what may seem to the outsider to be insignificant actions -- the "twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies" of everyday life.[47] When mass media become part of or more important in a community, several layers of social interaction and individual meaning are added to the anthropologists' difficult chore of interpreting culture.

What exactly does the ethnographer do? He attempts to describe a group or culture, focusing on the routine, everyday lives of people. Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. The researcher begins by selecting a problem or topic, which then shapes the research design. Ethnographic research is usually founded on a phenomenological paradigm with a multicultural perspective. The subjective realities of individuals are critical to the ethnographer, and few assumptions about the structures of relationships are made.[48] "Such an approach is the basis of grounded theory: the theory underlying a sociocultural system or community develops directly from empirical data."[49]

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[45] Timothy P. Meyer, Paul J. Traudt, and James A. Anderson, "Nontraditional Mass Communication Research Methods: An Overview of Observational Case Studies of Media Use in Natural Settings," in Dan Nimmo, ed., *Communication Yearbook 4*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1980), pp. 263-264.

[46] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 5.

[47] Ibid., p. 7.

Ethnographic techniques are the most effective means we have of getting at

> the insider's perception of reality, [which] is instrumental to understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviors. Native perceptions may not conform to an 'objective' reality, but they help the fieldworker understand why members of the social group do what they do. In contrast to a priori assumptions about how systems work from a simple, linear, logical perspective -- which might be completely off target -- ethnography typically takes a phenomenologically oriented research approach.[50]

Fieldwork is the cornerstone of ethnographic research. Typically, it involves a period of between six months and two years observing and living with a group or in a community. Usually, the ethnographer begins the fieldwork period by learning the language of the people under study, understanding their kinship structures, and gathering basic census and historical data. "Even when the ethnographer has specific hypotheses to test in the field, information gathering proceeds inductively. Typically, the ethnographer generates more hypotheses than concrete findings in a study."[51]

After this initial period, the ethnographer will focus in on specific themes or problems he wants to understand. As he becomes more comfortable with the group, and vice versa, he will begin participating in various group activities, and to observe closely those he is not involved in. The ethnographer may also conduct surveys, either formal or informal, and collect life histories of individuals. "One articulate invidual may provide a wealth of valuable information. The ethnographer must then cross-check, compare, and triangulate this information before it becomes a foundation on which to build a knowledge base."[52]

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[48] David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography Step by Step* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 1989), pp. 11-15.

[49] Ibid, pp. 15-16.

[50] Ibid., p. 30.

[51] Ibid., p. 19.

In contrast to other social science research methods, it is not uncommon nor undesirable for the ethnographer to write sections of the ethnography while the fieldwork is going on. During this time he may seek feedback from colleagues and natives, which will likely result in a reformulation of hypotheses and descriptions. Although the scope of the ethnographic report depends, obviously, on the problem under study, generally it should be as holistic as possible. In the end, the ethnography must "ring true" to natives and other anthropologists who are familiar with the group described. "These readers may disagree with the researcher's interpretations and conclusions, but they should recognize the details of the description as accurate."[53]

American Mass Media and 'Imaginary Social Worlds'

The anthropologist's ability to get the "inside view" is well illustrated by John Caughey in his book *Imaginary Social Worlds*. His study shows that for both Americans and Pakistanis, imaginary social relationships with media figures are common. In fact, American individuals will commonly have imaginary relationships with over 1,000 media figures, and are "expected to possess extensive information about them."[54] He also illustrates how the interface between mass media and traditional culture involves a creative interpretation and utilization of messages by the individual.[55]

Only through ethnographic study, including in-depth interviews with over 500 informants, could Caughey have shown how intensely and directly an individual "shifts from the role of observer to that of participant and 'enters' the other world."[56] Psychologically, he or she will respond to the media figure very much as if it were an actual relationship.[57] People also often "temporarily abandon their own identities and social roles and, by imaginatively projecting their consciousness onto the media image, take on alternate personal and social identities."[58] Caughey argues that the tragic story of Mark David Chapman, John Lennon's assassin who identified so closely with Lennon that he took on his identity, exemplified an extreme occurrence of a process that is fairly normal among Americans.

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[52] Ibid., p. 19.

[53] Ibid., p. 21.

[54] John L. Caughey, *Imaginary Social Worlds*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 32.

[55] Whiting, p. 102.

Americans fall in love with some media figures, harbor intense hatred for others, identify with some, have friendships with others, relate to others as brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers. They have these imaginary relationships when they are directly involved with media and also when they are not. They admire and imitate media figures, and these imaginary beings often have a real and important effect on "real" social relationships. "Two people may 'visit' while watching a TV program. In some cases, they switch their attention back and forth between the two worlds; at other times, they attend to both. The typical American date often follows such a pattern."[59]

Caughey's study of the role of media figures in imaginary social relationships is brief, but captures the complexity of culturally grounded psychological reactions to mass media. He could not have gathered this information with any other research technique except ethnography, specifically in-depth interviews (he also asked informants to keep diaries and used himself as a subject). By gathering strong evidence that "rings true," he proves that "such pseudo-social relationships constitute a pervasive and powerfully significant influence. Any approach to American society that ignores these social relationships is seriously incomplete."[60]

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[56] Caughey, p. 37.
[57] Ibid., p. 37.
[58] Ibid., p. 38.
[59] Ibid., p. 64.
[60] Ibid., p. 69.

The flexibility of ethnographic techniques also allows Caughey to perform a cross-cultural check on his findings. He notes that Pakistanis have similar artificial relationships with media figures, often American ones but sometimes Pakistanis.

> In fantasies people may transform foreign media figures into Pakistani identities and interact with them in terms of local situations and roles. Such relationships can also serve as a vehicle for Westernization. Through repeated media consumption and through fantasies based on such materials, the individual may be partially enculturated into Western assumptions, values, and modes of fantasy.[61]

The ethnographer's ability to be nonjudgmental about cultural practices is critical to understanding the "emic," or insider's, perspective. He must respect the community he is studying, and be able to accept circumstances that do not initially make sense. This will obviously be a problem for development planners in using ethnography in project planning and assessment. Development projects, although they vary greatly in intent, by definition attempt to change the *status quo*, including economic, educational, governmental, and settlement patterns that are often deeply embedded in traditional cultural practices.[62]

Even the most enlightened people who are involved in planning and implementing development projects must believe that something is not quite right in the community they are entering. They are arriving with preconceived notions, formed either from previous visits or, more frequently, from reports and papers supplied by the government or a development agency. They arrive with goals as well, which can cloud the judgments of even the best-intentioned individuals. While it is acceptable, and often recommended, to ground the "emic" perspective in an "etic" -- or external, social science -- one, it seems that the "staff anthropologist" should remain as independent as possible from the rest of the project staff.[63] He must be able to collect his data in any way he sees fit and to state his views freely. The project plan must be flexible enough to adjust to the insider's perspective.

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[61] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[62] Charles C. Hughes and John M. Hunter, "Disease and 'Development' in Africa," in Hans Peter Drietzel, ed., *The Social Organization of Health* (New York: MacMillan, 1971), p. 152.

Mass Communication and Indigenous Communication

Part of the New World Information Order debate focused on the role of indigenous culture and communications systems in development. NWIO backers pointed out that Lerner and other old paradigm advocates strongly suggested that mass communication would eventually replace indigenous communication systems based on oral communication and audience participation.[64] These traditional forms of communication involve storytelling, puppetry, folk drama, folk songs, folk art, shadow plays, poetry, midwives, shamans and healers, marketplaces, ceremonies, celebrations, and traditional leaders.[65]

The NWIO defense of native culture led some development communication planners to realize at least some major strengths of indigenous communications systems. "Because they are local traditional forms of communication and often serve as primary sources of information, indigenous channels enjoy a high degree of credibility and acceptance by the people."[66] In addition, indigenous systems are more localized, flexible, and subtle than mass media, making them attractive channels for development messages that must take local conditions into account. These conditions can change quickly and are difficult to assess from distant, centralized communications centers required by mass media.[67]

Despite the obvious potential of indigenous systems in development, little theoretical or practical work has been done with them. Academics interested in development communication problems must realize that ""without proper understanding of the nature of the system, in-depth analyses of past experience and clarification of cloudy issues, no great breakthrough can be expected in the field."[68] The local orientation and complexity of indigenous communication systems requires a micro-level approach by academic researchers and development planners. Of all the techniques available, ethnography seems best suited to the task, because it implies a "sustained, microscopic, inductive examination of the natural interactional communications which connect human beings to the mass media and to each other."[69]

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[63] Fetterman, p. 32.

[64] Georgette Wang and Wimal Dissanayake, "Indigenous Communication Systems and Development: A Reappraisal," in Wang and Dissanayake, eds., *Continuity and Change*, p. 24.

[65] Meheroo Jussawalla and Debra Lynn Hughes, "The Information Economy and Indigenous Communications," in Wang and Dissanayake, p. 255.

[66] Ibid, p. 256.

[67] Wang and Dissanayake, "Indigenous Communication Systems," pp. 22-23.

TV and Totem in Tonga

Several ethnographic studies indicate that the media -- especially the electronic media, which do not demand literacy -- have a major impact upon traditional cultures. Different layers of mediation occur. The communications hardware plays a role in structuring the communication, in the realms of programming production, transmission, and receiving. Corporations and individuals producing the programs shape the content. But the receivers of the programming are far from being passive receivers.

In the Pacific kingdom of Tonga an indigenous form of communication, the all-male drinking ceremony called *faikava*, became radically altered by the video cassette recorder (VCR). The VCR became rapidly infused in Tonga and other Pacific nations during the early 1980s because over-air television broadcasts are nearly impossible due to great distances between islands. Beth Hahn, the anthropologist who wrote about what she called *vitio faikava*, knew nothing of this new hybrid of traditional and modern forms of communication when she first arrived in Tonga. She was struck, however, by the similarity between the traditional *faikava* and *viteo faikava*. One obvious resemblance was their stress on hierarchy, with "high ranking males sitting furthest away from the kava bowl, and a fairly distinct boundary drawn around the activity, i.e., no onlookers or casual participants around the periphery of the circle. Concerning the inside of the circle, it remains inviolate except for the shuttling and spinning of coconut shell cups."[70]

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[68] Ibid., p. 27.
[69] James Lull, "The Social Uses of Television," *Human Communication Research* 6:3 (1980), p. 200.

Hahn noticed that the VCR occupied the traditional place of honor furthest away from the kava bowl and the door -- giving the highest ranking males the worst viewing position. Conversation during a traditional *faikava* normally grows slower late in the evening as the kava takes effect, but video demands a constant rate of attention. Finally, many topics of conversation -- those of local interest -- were replaced by the video and conversations relating to what was on the tv screen.[71]

In this case, much of the anthropologist's information came from *informants*, people who participated in the *viteo faikava* and reported what happened. Hahn had to be flexible in her research because, as a female, she was barred from direct participation in the ceremonies. While in some ways this hindered her research, by having to rely on a Tongan native for information and some interpretation, she was able to get the "emic" perspective. Also, the flexibility of ethnography allowed her do an in-depth study of a phenomenon she knew nothing of before arriving. Her deep understanding of Tongan culture allowed her to understand the *viteo faikava* without preconceived theories.[72]

The mass media, almost by definition, demand a response, both from individuals and from the society. The Tongan example illustrates that when the media penetrate a traditional society, this response will necessarily change the individual and the society. New symbols and modes of discourse will need to be integrated into the culture, or repulsed with such force (as in Iran) to also create fundamental cultural changes. While print communications are accessible only to the literate population -- an elite of sorts -- the mediums of television, radio, VCRs, cassette tape, etc., are very democratic. Not only can the illiterate and semi-literate utilize these media, but they are also exposed to a very wide range of acoustic and visual symbols -- more symbols than can be represented on the printed page. As a result, the new media are likely having a much broader and immediate impact than that made by spread of the printing press.[73]

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[70] Elizabeth P. Hahn, "I Want My Kava TV! Video Kava Circles in the Kingom of Tonga," unpublished paper, p. 4

[71] Ibid., pp. 5-6

[72] discussion with author, 1989.

These effects are both personal and cultural. To be able to process all of these new symbols the individual must "develop new reading, viewing, and listening habits that involve suspending disbelief, engaging in automatic low-grade skepticism, or developing new techniques of falsifying information and evaluating fictions."[74] The individual must also learn to distinguish between meaningful and meaningless cultural symbols. Just as a parent learns to unconsciously listen for important messages among the almost ceaseless vocalizations of a six-year-old child, so must the media be monitored for essential cultural figures.[75]

The media change what is "essential" to know. Almost everyone has experienced the uncomfortable feeling of being entirely unable to participate in a conversation centered around a television program that he or she has happened to miss. Those in television-saturated societies who choose not to own a television are seen as being purposefully rebellious, rejecting society's norms. Both our ways of communicating and the content of our communication are so heavily influenced by the media that ceasing to monitor them can leave one feeling in an almost other-worldly state, unconnected to "the outside world."

Television, radio, telephones -- when present, they seem nearly impossible to ignore, even when their messages are hardly related to day-to-day, physical survival. When anthropologist Edmund Carpenter observed people rushing into their homes at a furious pace to answer a phone call that was probably unimportant, he conducted an experiment. He called several pay phones in Grand Central Station and Kennedy Airport. "Almost always someone answered. When I asked why they had answered, they said, 'Because it rang.'"[76]

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[73] Eric J. Leed, "Review Essay: elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* and the Structure of Communications Revolutions," *American Journal of Sociology* 88:2 (September 1982), pp. 425-426.

[74] Ibid., p. 427.

[75] Ibid., p. 427.

Responses to new media or unusual media messages are often quite different than those intended by any particular development communication project, and they are often much more difficult to measure, or even discuss, than economic, health, nutritional, sanitation, or educational benefits intended by the projects. Part of the reason that evaluation of development communication projects can be so difficult is that along with the project hardware and software often comes many messages that have nothing to do with the development goals. For example, when satellite television facilities are set up and TV sets distributed to villages, entertainment programs often come along with the more serious development-oriented fare.

The Algonkian Communities of Canada

As mentioned above, indigenous cultures must be well-understood before the changes that are taking place because of new media can be discussed authoritatively. A study of the impact of satellite television in the Algonkian communities of Northern Manitoba, Canada, is an excellent example of how a good understanding can be achieved in the context of a media study. Using sociological techniques -- surveys, experiments, and the like -- in addition to ethnography, it demonstrated that television had definitely brought about some changes, while other assumed changes *seemed* to occur superficially but had not really become embedded in Algonkian culture and thought. In addition, the study indicated the need for precise delineation between changes *actually* brought about by the new media technologies, *potential* changes, and shifts brought about by other new technology, like jet travel.

Both positive and negative effects of satellite television were observed. The introduction of television there increased "out-group identity," but these seemed superficial and had "not yet reached to deeper-lying levels of values and motives." There were also indications of increased stress, and many in the community voiced fears that television would promote laziness, distort reality, and threaten traditions. The most interesting finding was that in important ways the Algonkian had absorbed television into their traditional ways of thinking. They used television as they used dreams and shaking tents, "for finding out about the future, for making contact with powerful helper figures, and for receiving personally meaningful messages."[77] The authors of the study conclude that the Algonkian communities are only superficially affected by television, and that while they may use it as a useful tool (for entertainment, babysitting, etc.), they do so only "as long as such roles may be absorbed within traditional frames of reference by metaphorical transformations which show their symbolic parallel to more traditional processes."[78]

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[76] Edmund Carpenter, *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me!* (Great Britain: Paladin Books, 1976), pp. 11-12.

Radio in Samoa and Television in Belize

Studies of radio in Samoa and satellite broadcasting in Belize also illustrate the unpredictable impact that new mass media can have on social relations and structures. When mass media begin to play a prominent role in a community, they are likely to change its social structure. Sometimes these changes are subtle and have little impact on the social hierarchy.[79] In Samoa, radio became quickly integrated into the traditional social structure, with the elite controlling radio communication. Regular broadcasts by "royal chiefs" combining Samoan and modern ideas "have personalized and symbolized the new Samoan political leadership functions that go with recent 'self-government' experiments. They represent, as a Samoan put it, the 'dignity' of Samoa 'coming into the village.'"[80] The Samoan leaders, however, could not use radio to radically increase their power. A chief's radio speech promoting new farming practices was rebuffed by the people, who felt that the topic was beneath his dignity; in addition, what did the chief know about taro growing? He was clearly not an expert.[81]

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[77] Gary Granzberg, "The Impact and Meaning of Television in Algonkian Communities of Northern Manitoba, Canada: A Summary," University of Winnipeg. Project Executive Summary. Washington, D.C., 1980, pp. 3-4.

[78] Ibid., p. 6.

[79] Peck, p. 106.

[80] Ibid., p. 107.

In the Central American nation of Belize the advent of satellite broadcasting was very disruptive of the social order, not only changing the interests of the people but also displacing the cultural "agenda setters." American television programming dominates; "Tastes have changed to the point where a visit by Gary Matthews, outfielder for the Chicago Cubs and a new hero of Belizean youth, drew bigger crowds than the visits of either Queen Elizabeth or Pope John Paul."[82]

Those most disturbed by the changes in Belizean culture are the wealthy and foreign educated natives and the expatriate foreign residents. These people are no longer the first to hear the latest news or to wear the latest Paris and New York fashions.

> Ten years ago when someone returned from a trip to New York or Miami they strutted their new clothes around for weeks, tried out their new words at parties, and displayed the latest bit of technology in their home. The consumption styles of the Belize elite are now revealed as frauds -- though they presume to sit on the top of the local heap, they cannot come close to matching what everyone can see on Miami Vice, in the advertisements, on the news.[83]

Values and fashions, which previously flowed from the U.S. and Britain but were mediated by a powerful local elite, now come directly from the United States. The direct broadcasts of Chicago superstation WGN have turned many Belizeans into Chicago Cubs fans, virtually shutting down the country for days when the Cubs made the playoffs in 1983. Belizean children have even been heard singing "The Star Spangled Banner" before their own games.[84]

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[81] Ibid., p. 107.

[82] Richard R. Wilk, "Colonial time and TV Time: Baseball and Consciousness in Belize," unpublished paper, p. 1.

[83] Ibid., p. 6.

[84] Ibid., p. 5.

Local institutions, customs, and language seem to remain largely unaffected by satellite television, but one anthropologist argues that the local power structure has been superseded: "As [the] colonial model of the world changes under the impact of television, the basis of political rhetoric and political legitimacy is also changing."[85] Television programming is controlled by unknown individuals in distant, foreign metropolitan centers. Even the basic rhythms of life are fundamentally altered, as U.S. sports seasons and weekly prime-time schedules supplant some Belizean activities and time-shift others.[86]

James Lull and the Ethnography of Mass Communication

James Lull is the main proponent and practitioner of mass communication ethnography. He argues the need for ethnographic methods because the role of media in everyday life is so complex that traditional variable analysis cannot take into account the reception and interpretation of messages, which concern content, and the personal and social uses made of media that have little to do with content.[87] According to Lull, ethnographic techniques are uniquely capable of revealing "the intertwined, interacting, and transforming makeup of the communicative process."[88]

Studying people in their natural environments is the best way to gain "insight into the ways in which they perceive, interpret and organize their social worlds."[89] Individuals do not just interact with the mass media on a one-to-one basis; rather, the media enters their social world and has an impact on the relations within that world. These relations are often ambiguous, even to those involved, and therefore must be studied carefully using participant-observation, direct observation, interviewing, and informant techniques. It is also essential that the impact of mass media on these social relations be studied over time.[90]

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[85] Ibid., p. 2.

[86] Ibid., p. 7.

[87] Lull, *Mass Media and Family Communication*, p. 4.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., p. 12.

[90] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

Lull advocates ethnographic techniques because they allow the forming of "grounded theories," which follow from observed data rather than vice versa. Ethnographic techniques allow us to understand behavior in a more complex and detailed manner than quantitative analysis does. We can safely assume that our observations are valid because they are of real-world behaviors. Finally, the "lay public" will more likely read and understand studies that use qualitative methods.[91]

In his Ph.D. dissertation, Lull studied three U.S. midwestern families and their patterns of media usage, concluding that "Television and other media...play a central part in the ways in which families construct their social realities."[92] Perhaps his most important finding, however, is that both children and adults use media in an unplanned fashion. He argues that this contradicts the 'uses and gratifications' approach, because the audience does not have an overt agenda for "using" communication messages, as the approach implies.[93] Writes Lull:

> Mass media can also be viewed as important and uniquely employed social resources in interpersonal communication systems. They are handy expedients which can be exploited by individuals, coalitions, and family units to serve their personal needs, create practical relationships, and engage the social world. Television and other mass media...can now be seen to play central roles in the methods which families and other social units employ to interact normatively.[94]

Lull's theory builds upon that of ethnomethodology, "wherein the assumptive world of social interaction is itself treated as a phenomenon."[95] This world does not simply exist as a background upon which mass media are superimposed; rather, it is created by individuals in an attempt to make their day-to-day lives meaningful.[96] With the techniques of ethnography, Lull argues, the researcher can "grasp as completely as possible with minimal disturbance the 'natives' perspective' on relevant communicative and sociocultural matters indigenous to him."[97] This can be accomplished with long-term, small-scale studies that emphasize inductive reasoning and focus on communications between individuals and the mass media.[98]

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[91] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[92] Ibid., p. 269.
[93] Ibid., p. 276.
[94] Lull, "The Social Uses of Television," p. 198.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

Drawing upon both his own ethnographic research and the studies done in *World Families Watch Television*, Lull posits that television serves four basic relational functions: communication facilitation, affiliation/avoidance, social learning, and competence/dominance.[99] Communication facilitation occurs, for example, when a child uses characters, stories, or themes from television to enter adult conversations.[100] Having a television set on can help ease discomfort during quiet lulls in conversation, and give family members and guests a common agenda for discussion.[101] Television is also used to facilitate opportunitiess for interpersonal contact or avoidance, and for learning, especially from actors or actresses who serve as role models and role confirmers.[102] When a family member acts similarly to someone seen on television, the family members actions are generally accepted by other family members.[103]

While these findings may not seem to be revolutionary -- indeed, many are suggested by other types of mass media studies and also by common sense -- they are critical because the demonstrate the directness and usefulness of ethnographic techniques. By simply carrying out a few studies on his own and commissioning a half-dozen others for *World Families Watch Television*, Lull has arrived at findings that "ring true" and do not require a lot of theoretical support. His findings are "grounded" in direct observation, and serve not only to illuminate how individuals and families utilize the mass media, but also how media insidiously and often subtly shapes their entire social world. His findings also suggest that many quantitative studies examining "effects" of mass media are bound to fail because a variable matrix that could really capture the meaning of mass media in everyday life would be extremely complex.

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[97] Ibid., p. 199.
[98] Ibid., p. 200.
[99] Ibid., p. 202.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., p. 203.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., p. 205.

Conclusion

After reviewing traditional development communication scholarship, ethnographic theory and techniques were presented as a necessary addition to the existing research. Without the anthropologists' grounded view of culture and social life, many important potential and real effects of development projects are underemphasized or ignored. While quantitative social science methods are helpful and indispensable, they are not adequate for understanding the many levels of culture and communication that exist in even the simplest of traditional cultures. The use of ethnographic techniques and anthropological studies by development communication planners and academics studying development communication will strengthen the field and increase the possibilities for successful development projects.

A Catechism for Censorship: The Development of Circular Number 1000 in World War I France

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A Catechism for Censorship: The Development of Circular Number 1000 in World War I France

This paper describes the organization of censorship and propaganda in France during the First World War. It illuminates the methods by which the French government established one of the first comprehensive bureaucracies designed to control public opinion through the press in wartime, an elaborate system of control that proved to be a key factor in the country's ability to sustain morale during four and one half years of frightful slaughter.[1] This topic has apparently never before been presented to an English-speaking audience, and modern studies on it even in France are rare. Sources used here are mostly primary, based on documents in the Archives Nationales and Service Historique de l'Armée de la Terre, both in Paris, and in departmental archives in Marseille and Montpellier.

It may be appropriate to begin by quoting from a former censor of the period.

"It was the source," wrote Marcel Berger in 1932, reflecting on his role as French censor during World War I. "Circular Number 1000 would nip at the bud the freshest of information. It was the catechism and dictionary of the perfect censor."[2]

Berger was one of hundreds[3] of censors who worked in France between August 1914 and October 1919 in what became a vast bureaucratic network of censorship and propaganda. It was invented and refined out of necessity, of the need to control the press in two ways, believed authorities. The first way was negatively. That is, to censor newspapers which published material authorities didn't like for a huge variety of reasons, and to punish newspapers which did not obey censor's requests. The second way was positively, and it developed later in the war. Authorities slowly realized they could influence newspapers to publish stories favorable to the government and the war, and through that to not only sustain morale at home, but to persuade neutral nations that France was fighting on the just and honorable side. In fact, such positive influence might even persuade certain neutral nations to join France against Germany. Nations such as, say, the United States.

It seems possible to allow that World War I France invented a comprehensive modern propaganda machine emulated by authoritarian nations who have borrowed these techniques now some 75 years old.[4]

But much of what came to be a well-oiled propaganda/censorship machine began jerry-rigged. The war burst unexpectedly on the French people. The assassination of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand and Sophia in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, was a European crisis, true. But there had been other crises, in 1905 and 1911, for instance. No one thought this act by some young student named Prinzip would spark war. It was *a* crisis, but not *the* crisis, or so most of the French public thought.[5] War became a distinct probability to French newspapers only on July 25 1914, about a week before mobilization.

The ministry of war at this point knew several things concerning the press in France. One, they did not like the irresponsible and sensational tone of much of it.[6] Secondly, in case of war, they were not about to let it go uncensored.[7] This had happened in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, and a description of French troop movements in a Paris newspaper was directly blamed by the French military for its defeat of Sedan.[8] Censorship, therefore, was absolutely essential, and the sooner the better. But thirdly, the war ministry realized censorship would be a massive undertaking. French journalism before World War I was in its golden age. The variety of newspapers available was astounding, and stories were written with flair, illustrated with style. Most important daily newspapers cost only five centimes, the "penny press" of France. In fact, on the eve of the war, Paris readers alone could choose from a bewildering array of 57 daily newspapers.[9]

The war ministry had determined that every one of them needed to be controlled, and relied on a censorship operation set up August 3, 1914, the day before France declared war. It was called the *Bureau de la Presse*, that is, simply, the press office. It was to become almost a second set of editors shadowing each newspaper in the country for five years.

It was not that this censorship was unpopular from the beginning. In fact, the French parliament, before adjourning so that the government could fight what everyone assumed would be a short war, gave unanimous support to the censor's role. Not only that, newspapers themselves agreed that censorship was fine. On August 13, the Commission of the French Press was created to represent press interests during the war. President was Jean Dupuy, publisher of _Le Petit Parisien_, at that time France's largest daily newspaper, with a wartime circulation reaching two million.[10] This commission declared its enthusiastic support of censorship because, number one, everyone thought the war would be over in a few weeks or at most a few months, and number two, the press did not want to reveal French troop movements and lose their country's war, as in 1870.[11] Censorship was accepted, then, under two assumptions: that it would be brief, and that it would involve only news of sensitive military issues. Both of these assumptions, unfortunately, were wrong, and because French law concerning censorship during a state of siege was vague, the government was able to interpret it to its liking, as long as the state of siege decree remained. Authorities made sure that it did.

The month of August 1914, in fact, was a remarkable period of war reporting in France. It's now called the "bourrage de crâne," or in English, the "eyewash" period. "Eyewash" meant readers were subjected to sensationalized exaggerations suggesting farfetched heroism of allied troops, while pinning allegations of baseness and cowardice onto the enemy. A famous headline from this period was published in Le Matin of Paris on August 24, reading, "Russian Cossacks five steps from Berlin." A large provincial daily from Marseille, Le Petit Provençal, published a variation on this theme during this period, "Russians Marching on Berlin." In character with some of America's contemporary tabloid press, though, we read the story underneath: "The plan of the Russian generals is to march directly to Berlin." It's likely that was the plan of all the allies. But the headlines attracted the readers at a time when in France few newspapers could count on subscriptions. They competed every day on newsstands with dozens of others to grab attention through headlines.

The eyewash of the period spilled into other areas, too, notably the infamous atrocity stories suggesting the great cruelty of the Germans. Most of the worst of this kind of eyewash finished by the end of 1914, but on December 17, the Marseille newspaper reported, in the words of reporter Marius Richard, "I could cite the case of an old lady who served to satisfy the passion of the barbarians. Her body was found several days after in a cellar. After having raped her, the wretches strangled her. Likewise, more than 20 of them violated a girl of 15, under the eyes of her parents, and left her dead."

Most of this sort of journalism was debunked after the war. British writer Arthur Ponsonby particularly was one of those interested in seeking out the truth in these stories, which he gathered together in a book he published in 1928.[12] One famous example is the atrocity story published in the wartime press which tells us that after a military victory in Belgium, German soldiers celebrated by tying Belgian priests head down inside their church bells, and ringing the bells. Ponsonby traced this story of November 1914 to the Kolnische Zeitung of Cologne, Germany. It reported, "When the fall of Antwerp was known, church bells were rung (meaning in Germany)."

Stage two of this story, published in Le Matin of Paris: "According to the Kolnische Zeitung, Antwerp clergy were forced to ring church bells when the fortress was taken."

Stage three, published in The Times of London: "According to what Le Matin has heard from Cologne, Belgian priests who refused to ring church bells after Antwerp was taken were driven away from their places."

Stage four, published in Corrierre dela Sera in Italy: "According to what The Times has heard from Cologne via Paris, the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring church bells when Antwerp was taken were sentenced to hard labor."

Stage five, published in Le Matin again: "According to information in Corrierre dela Sera from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the 'barbaric conquerors of Antwerp' punished Belgian priests for 'heroic refusal' to ring church bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down."[13]

Facing this sort of journalism, it's not hard to understand why the French censorship leaped with such enthusiasm into its role. Wrote Minister of War Millerand in a confidential memo to censors dated September 15, 1914: "Stop all false news or news harmful due to an excess of optimism or pessimism; censor articles violently attacking the government or the army command; do not permit German atrocity stories which risk terrorizing populations; do not permit articles suggesting the stop or suppression of hostilities...."[14] That directive was only the beginning.

But a good word needs to be said for the French press as well during this time. The French military during the first battles had absolutely no interest in telling the press what it was doing. In fact, the French government itself really didn't even know what the army was doing.[15] French newspapers were faced with a total news blackout on one side, even worse than Reagan's invasion of Grenada, and on the other side, readers clamoring for war news and only war news. What were editors to do? They tried to fill their pages mostly by borrowing news from foreign newspapers, by publishing long commentaries of retired officers and politicians, and by fleshing out any scrap of information the could get their hands on. This helps to explain some of the eyewash of these early weeks of war.

This eyewash style journalism really did not last long in the French press. By the end of August 1914 the French command was persuaded to issue a daily communiqué, and the press became more completely informed of military events. Reports began to take on a more restrained tone, positive, if possible, but realistic. Sensationalistic banner headlines disappeared from most newspapers. Partially the power of French censorship was reflected in this change, as banner headlines were banned in September, and the government was urging restraint. By October, however, it became clear to the press that merely restraining itself was not going to be enough. The censor was going to demand more severe measures. On September 13, the first French newspaper was suspended, 15 days for publishing something the censor had asked it to cut.[16] On September 18 Le Figaro in Paris printed its first complaint against censorship. And on September 30, Georges Clemenceau, a venerable French politician who also published a daily newspaper, mostly as an outlet for his personal opinions, saw his L'Homme Libre, that is, "Free Man," suppressed. Clemenceau tried to outsmart the censors by publishing his paper under a new name L'Homme Enchaîné, that is, "Chained Man." But a careless copy editor forget to change the old title in the mastheads on the inside pages, and the censor caught on.[17] Newspapers tried other ploys to fool the censor. Clemenceau tried mailing censored articles to each of his subscribers. Le Bonnet Rouge tried writing so much to censor that an overworked censor, they hoped, would inadvertently let some through. French authorities outmaneuvered most of these ploys.

The censorship in France was set up in 1914 under two ministries, the war ministry and the interior ministry.[18] The war ministry was to be in charge of the Bureau de la Presse in Paris, covering all Paris publications, and directing censorship commissions in the rest of France. These commissions, established for every city of any size, would consist of military officers appointed by a regional military commander. The military censors would be in charge of choppage in two areas, military and diplomatic. The military area basically covered anything of tactical importance to French military operations, while diplomatic censorship would cover anything of strategic importance. Most of this censorship was accepted as necessary by the press. The third area of censorship, called political, formed the great bone of contention between the government and the press.[19]

Political censorship was explained as early as September 1914 in a communiqué from the interior ministry.[20] In short, it was a catch-all for news deemed critical to authorities, and more, for anything deemed damaging to morale of the people. Damaging, such as news of strikes, pacifism, battles lost by the allies, and so on. For instance, the Battle of Tannenberg, disastrous to the Russian Army, was August 26-30, 1914. Most French readers didn't find out about it until well into 1915. A call by French writer Romain Rolland from Switzerland asking for a little sane reflection was censored. Calls for peace also were eliminated, as were many reports of labor strikes, especially in 1918. This is not to suggest readers were totally in the dark, as word of battles on the western front, the Russian Revolution and capitulation, and other major events reached readers in good time. It does, however, suggest the strength of censorship in France.

In 1914, the interior ministry decided to take on the duty of political censorship. It asked prefects for each French department to name civilian censors to a commission separate from the military.[21] The system soon proved intolerably unwieldy, however, and by 1915 the two sides were combined into one commission. At first newspapers brought proof sheets to the censors. But papers soon complained they could not stay within deadlines under this unwieldy system, so censors agreed to work at the newspaper offices themselves.[22] In Paris, however, newspapers clustered generally in the same area, the rue du Croissant and rue de Montmartre, so they agreed to bring proof sheets to the Bureau de la Presse.

By 1915 it was becoming clear to authorities that civilians and soldiers did not always see eye to eye on censorship. What was military news? What was political news? It was not always clear. A communiqué from the war ministry dated April 3, 1915 tried to sort out the difficulty, noting, "When a civilian censor asks the suppression of an article containing attacks against the government or parliament, the publication is censored....The disagreement seems only to come up, and this would evidently be in exceptional cases, when the civilian censor would be in favor of authorizing publication that a military censor would consider dangerous or inopportune....It can be definitely concluded that disagreement between the civilian and military censor will usually end with the article being censored."[23]

Disputes would finally be silenced for good in 1917. The military eliminated the civilian influence in censorship commissions. But disputes were the least of the government's problems in 1915, for what began as scattered protest had escalated into a unified demand from the French press against political censorship. Wrote editor Camille Ferdy in Le Petit Provençal on June 23, 1915, "The entire industry is going to end up in unanimous revolt if the good sense and fairness of the government does not decide to put an end to this abuse." A declaration from the Union of the Paris Press on October 30 of the same year observed, "The censor tends to twist the normal direction of public opinion France." This, of course, was exactly what authorities wanted.

To this mix came the twenty-eight page typewritten booklet stamped "confidential," and referred to by authorities through the rest of the war as "Circular Number 1000." Circular Number 1000 was established in its final form September 30, 1915, and used by censors throughout France until the end of the war. It tried to answer just about every question a conscientious censor in France could ask, beginning with a justification of the need for censorship. Authorities leaned on a law nearly 65 years old to make legitimate their censorship network, called the Law of August 9, 1849. The law had been passed during the short-lived Second Republic, in a very different France from that of La Belle Epoque after the century's turn, but authorities were aware they were not on firm legal ground. A report from the war ministry dated June 1914, only two months before the war,[24] described hypothetically how the government might set up censorship should war come. Referring to legal rights of censorship, the report noted, "To prevent indiscretions in the press, it will be necessary to appeal to the patriotism of journalists. But in case they pass over those appeals, it is also necessary to arm the authorities with new powers. The state of siege law does not actually provide penalties for press offenses, and refers them to a tribunal too accessible to jury debate." The report urged the government to advocate a new law eliminating these checks to censorship during a state of siege.

The government, of course, did not have time for that. Authorities were forced to rely on the law as it stood. They decided to interpret that law in a manner which allowed them to suspend or seize offending newspapers without going to a jury trial. Newspapers and some politicians claimed this was illegal, but it is often true that a country at war subverts awkward legal rights to the argument of national defense. Freedom of speech is one of the easiest to subvert.

Circular Number 1000 describes the bureaucratic organization as noted above; local censors who had questions would relay them to seven central switchboards in major cities around France. These centrals would in turn relay them to the

Bureau de la Presse, which would relay answers in the same manner. Also sent in this way were general directives from Paris. These directives would describe new material censors must not let pass or, rarely, material once forbidden and later allowed. Directives allowing material to be passed usually tried to put what public relations people today might call a spin on the news. Thus we have in 1915, for instance, directives forbidding criticism of government leaders, forbidding articles concerning French POWs, forbidding a polemic against a general in the Dardanelles campaign, forbidding articles unfriendly to Greece or Romania, forbidding "all descriptions tending to represent life in the trenches as fun." But a July 7, 1917 directive tells censors to let pass the news that the U.S. steamship "Orleans" has been torpedoed.[25] Brief reflection on the import of this news to France explains why authorities would want it read. The United States had just entered the war, and most people in France were convinced America was still doing nothing for the war effort. In the summer of 1917, this was basically true. But a report that a U.S. ship was sunk would prove otherwise, wouldn't it?

Circular Number 1000 lists all areas subject to censorship, including books, postcards, posters, drawings, photographs, brochures and, of course, newspapers. Speeches are included, although the circular admitted, "By their very nature, 'publication' by the spoken word often escapes a system of prior censorship. However, it can be possible for the service of censorship control to have access to a written speech to be given at a public meeting. In this case, it seems, the censorship service cannot refuse its responsibility."

The Circular also forbade street hawking of newspapers, believing that could do as much to get the population excited as sensational banner heads. The Law of August 9, 1849 declared, after all, that any publication "of a nature to excite or encourage disorder is forbidden." The ambiguous character of this statement made highly liberal interpretations possible, and helped authorities lean on the law when the censor's actions were criticized. Following these general comments, Circular Number 1000 described, in alphabetical order, sixteen pages of specific areas possibly needing censorship. An appendage of four more pages was added to this in May 1916. In addition, 573 directives ("consignes générales") were issued between January 1, 1915, when authorities were beginning to define the power of the censor, and December 31, 1918, when the elaborate network was well entrenched.[26] In fact, at one point, authorities advised censors to paste all the directives alphabetically in a scrapbook, so that all the rules could be easily consulted.[27] Included in Circular Number 1000 were, for example, "Africa, Troops of. Do not (let pass reports) extolling their value to the detriment of other troops." "Censors and censorship. Let pass criticism of a moderate form aiming at the institution and function of the censorship, but not constituting attacks against particular censors." "Peace, publications in favor of. These publications, forbidden in principle, may be authorized when they specifically refer to a victorious peace based on the triumph of righteousness." "Command, High. Do not let pass news of changes in the high command until they have been announced by official communications." And so on.

This refinement of what we might call negative control of the press was followed by the much slower development of the positive role. A report to the war ministry in October 1914[28] observed that the army's recalcitrant approach to providing news was harming morale at home. Just as bad, it was hurting the reputation of France in neutral countries. In response, the war ministry created the Service d'Information, or S.I. First director of the army's first public relations office was André Tardieu, a mobilized journalist from Paris. He wrote most of the news from the army himself. Also established was a system of officer-correspondents in each of France's armies on the western front. These officers would write reports of news to S.I., a little like the system of county correspondents operated by American weekly newspapers.

Tardieu left S.I. in 1915. By 1916, the correspondent system was showing its weaknesses, as these non-journalists tended to forget to write stories during battles, that is, just when newspapers wanted most to know what was going on. In February 1916 the Germans attacked the salient of Verdun. S.I. was not ready. A report on the service dated April 21, 1918[29] stated, "The German advance during the first days, amplified by all the noisy rumors and story-telling which circulated inevitably due to the lack of truthful information, were taking on the appearance of a public disaster." The military acted quickly, sending several officers to the front, not to fight, but to write stories, the first French example of war correspondents mobilized by the military itself. At this time French commanders seldom allowed independent civilian newspaper correspondents to report regularly from the French front.[30]

This report actually gives credit to those army reporters for establishing the legend of Verdun. "It was necessary to captivate public opinion for Verdun. Three officers, Madelin, Bordeaux, and Tessan were given the task. Every day these officers sent stories which for four months were nearly the only news from which the country could learn the character of the battle. In this way the mission of these officers was accomplished.... the renowned story of the resistance was spread to the world." Neville Lytton, a British officer charged with accompanying journalists to the front,[31] wrote after the war[32] that only France employed these army-controlled reporters, but that they were clever men, good writers, and able to pass on good stories to the war corespondents from the press. He agreed the battle of Verdun was "the best advertised show of the whole war," and said it was the French army correspondents who played the major role. Those Verdun battle legends are still part of World War I lore.

The French army's experiment in propaganda was working out well, although the government did not see that immediately. The role of the S.I. was reduced at the end of 1916. But on May 14, 1917, the French high command issued a communiqué to S.I., contending French newspapers were giving too little space to French operations, and too much to British operations.[33] This lack, the generals complained, was bad for morale, not only for the nation, but for the troops, who of course also read newspapers. The S.I. was given the impetus to reclaim its more powerful propaganda role. In fact, it finally allowed newspaper war correspondents to regularly report from the front, copying a system used by both the British and Americans.[34] More than that, its role was being expanded. S.I. split into two divisions, the second called the *Bureau d'Information Militaire*, and both sides took on services, not only of article preparation, but of photography, films, briefings of journalists, radio transmissions, daily communiqués, and even the army's own newspaper, called *Bulletin des Armées*. We had moved from an army which disdained public relations to one actively supporting a highly motivated propaganda network.

This does not mean the propaganda role of the civilian branches of government was stagnating. At the beginning of 1916, the government announced a new bureau designed to help the press, not only in France, but around the world, to understand its version of wartime events. It was called *Maison de la Presse*, and it was housed in an exclusive six-story Paris townhouse, rue François Premier, formerly occupied by the United States embassy.[35] The *Maison de la Presse* claimed legendary status, and some writers contended the most eccentric things were done there, all for the glory of French propaganda. For instance, Ponsonby, citing a book written by an unidentified "French Chief Editor,"[36] said that the glass-domed top floor of the building housed the photo/ciné department. "Its principal work consisted in making photographs and cuts of wooden figures with cut-off heads, torn-out tongues, gouged-out eyes, crushed skulls, and brains laid bare. The pictures thus made were sent as unassailable evidence of German atrocities to all parts of the globe, where they did not fail to produce the desired effect." This story sounds apocryphal, but German atrocity stories, along with Germany's decision to renew unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, did much to encourage the United States to enter the war on the allied side.[37]

The _Maison de la Presse_ in May 1917 became a clearinghouse for all the government's propaganda efforts. News emanating from the army's division was channelled through the office. The _Bureau de la Presse_ still operated independently, but questions and complaints of the censorship from journalists were to be directed to the _Maison_. Under the leadership of a politician named Berthelot,[38] this center was separated into four offices: the diplomatic department, the military department, the department of translation and analysis of the foreign press, and the propaganda department. The propaganda department was again sub-divided into three sections, allied countries, neutral countries, and general ideas. The _Maison_ was staffed by diplomats, journalists, university professors, or wounded war veterans.[39]

While the Maison was operated by the foreign affairs ministry, the war ministry still controlled the censorship bureau, that is, the Bureau de la Presse. A report in December 1917 suggested this arm, too, could do much more than simply cut articles and close down newspapers. The report by a man named Moulin, stamped "confidential,"[40] observed that the office inevitably had close daily contact with press correspondents. "The Bureau de la Presse could become an actual center of French propaganda," Moulin wrote. He noted that if the office were to be more open to reporters, "little by little they would fall into the habit of waiting for us to give them the most interesting information, and in this way they would naturally become agents for our propaganda." The report asked for 1,600 Francs to set up comfortable offices at the Bureau for reporters, and asked the high command and war ministry to furnish the news.

A report at the beginning of 1918,[41] unsigned, to the war ministry lists in greater detail how this news should be handled. It advised:

1. When battles get more bitter, remind people of German acts of cruelty;

2. Stress the necessity of victory and disaster of a negotiated peace;

3. Emphasize any evidence of the cohesion of the allies;

4. Talk about the economic and agricultural situation after victory;

5. Present the infantry soldier in a good light;

6. Insist on the confidence soldiers have in their generals;

7. Have appear in newspapers stories of French troop success, and value of sacrifice of the soldiers;

8. Show necessity of honoring war dead and military cemeteries.

This kind of polished concept of the role of censorship and propaganda during wartime reached a long way from the halting attempts of August 1914. Even the most stubborn, the generals themselves, had been convinced of the need to take into consideration the power of public opinion. It's surprising to note that, in reality, French newspaper readers did have a fairly good picture of the war, if sometimes belated, twisted to the sanguine, and poked with holes. But censorship continued long after the armistice; the last directive to censors was dated October 15, 1919,[42] three days after the network officially ended.[43] Authorities had apparently found censorship a useful tool and were understandably reticent about abandoning such power.

To conclude, it is clear that the double-bladed sword of propaganda and censorship played a central role in the French government's strategy during the war, and became a modern pattern for other governments able to wield enough authoritarian power to make it work. Moreover, it seems clear that during World War I the French government learned to treat its press as a war industry, no different from, say, a munitions factory. Marius Richard, secretary of the French Union of Regional Daily Newspapers, acknowledged in 1917[44] that the government considered the press to be "an industry for national defense." The French network of censorship and propaganda made certain that the press fulfilled this role, reflecting Lasswell's observation that during World War I authorities realized power over men and means of production was no longer enough; authorities needed also to mobilize public opinion.[45]

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Notes

[1] Devos, Jean-Claude, and Nicot, Jean, "La censure de la presse pendant la guerre de 1914-1918." Actes du 105e congrès national des sociétés savantes, Caen, 1980, *La diffusion du savoir de 1610 à nos jours* (Paris, 1983), p. 355. Bellanger, Claude; Godechot, Jacques; Guiral, Pierre; Terrou, Fernand; *Histoire générale de la presse française, Tome 3: de 1871 à 1940* (Paris, 1972), p. 416.

[2] Berger, Marcel, and Allard, Paul, *Les secrets de la censure pendant la grande guerre* (Paris, 1932), p. 10-11.

[3] A list of 171 men (no women) who acted as censors in Paris alone was published by the Association amicale des anciens censeurs de Bureau de la Presse au ministère de la guerre, *Le crayon bleu. Annuare pour 1919*.

[4] Bellanger, et. al., p. 425.

[5] Becker, Jean-Jacques, *1914: Comment les français sont entrés dans la guerre* (Paris, 1977), p. 135.

[6] Paris, Archives Nationales, carton F7 12845, report dated 3 September 1914. Also Paris (Château de Vincennes), Service Historique de L'Armée de la Terre (S.H.A.T.), carton 5N373.

[7] Paris, S.H.A.T., 5N373, *Ibid*.

[8] Gabriel-Robinet, L., *La censure* (Paris, 1965), p. 147.

[9] Bellanger et. al., p. 138.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 430.

[11] Galabru, L., *La liberté individuelle et la liberté de la presse en temps de guerre* (Montauban, 1918), p. 87.

[12] Ponsonby, Arthur, *Falsehood in Wartime* (London, 1928).

[13] *Ibid*., p. 161.

[14] Marseille, Archives Départementales, packet AD VI T 6/2; letter from Bordeaux dated September 15, 1914.

[15] Becker, Jean-Jacques, *1914: Comment les français sont entrés dans la guerre*, p. 525.

[16] Hennequin, F., Du régime de la presse pendant la guerre (Paris, 1916), p. 8.

[17] Berger and Allard, p. 71.

[18] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N373, report from war ministry dated March 13, 1917.

[19] Bellanger, et. al., pp. 414-416.

[20] In a circular dated Bordeaux, Sept. 22, 1914, war minister Millerand wrote, "The council of ministers believes that there is an advantage in distinguishing in the press censorship service between political censorship and military censorship, and has conferred upon representatives of the Ministry of the Interior the examination of newspaper articles covering domestic politics." Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N372.

[21] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N372.

[22] Liens, Georges, "La commission de censure et la commission de contrôle postal à Marseille pendant la première guerre mondiale." Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, 18 (October-December 1917), p. 651.

[23] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N337.

[24] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N373.

[25] Marseille, Archives Départementales, AD VI T 6/2: censorship 1914-1918.

[26] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N376.

[27] By Jules Gautier, May 31, 1916. Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N334.

[28] By Graziani, deputy chief clerk for the high command, October 24, 1914. Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N391.

[29] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N391.

[30] Knightly, Phillip, The First Casualty (London, 1975 and 1989), pp. 94-95.

[31] Knightly calls him one of the army's "travelling censors." Ibid., p. 96.

[32] Lytton, Neville, The Press and the General Staff (London, 1920), p. xiv.

[33] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N363.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ponsonby, p. 179.

[37] Peterson, H.C., Propaganda for War. The Campaign Against American Neutrality 1914-1917 (Norman, Okla., 1939), pp. 45-46.

[38] Devos, Jean-Claude, and Nicot, Jean, p. 355.

[39] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N363, booklet describing the operation of the "Maison de la Presse," dated May 1916.

[40] Paris, S.H.A.T., carton 5N363.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Paris (Nanterre), Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (B.D.I.C.), cartons F270 Rés CNS.

[43] Becker, Jean-Jacques, La France en guerre 1914-18: La grande mutation (Paris, 1988), p. 71.

[44] Letter to interior ministry dated November 23, 1917. Paris, Archives Nationales, packet F18 2380.

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Conflictive News Coverage and Public Salience of Foreign Nations

By
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As new political issues make their way onto the public agenda of importance, old issues are inevitably pushed down and off the agenda. According to the "agenda setting" approach of mass communication, the public attaches the same weights of importance to issues that the news media attach and changes its evaluations of issue importance in response to changes in the media.[1] This study traced the cumulative effects of news media coverage of foreign nations on public salience of foreign nations. It offers a redefinition of the central concept of issue "salience" in agenda setting. Salience is extended from the traditional approach of examining news media influence on what we (the public) think about to how we think about issues, people, and -- in this study -- countries in the news.

Several researchers have argued that international news is precisely the type of "unobtrusive" issue with which people have little direct experience and, therefore, the news media have their greatest agenda-setting influence.[2] For instance, Atkin and Garramone observed that "while researchers have not examined the agenda-setting process in the international context, extrapolation from the evidence in domestic studies suggests that those countries or foreign leaders at the top of the news agenda will be seen as the most important."[3]

Both the frequency and duration of news media coverage appear to interact in influencing the public agenda.[4] Most agenda-setting studies, however, measured only the effects of sheer frequency of news media coverage on subsequent public salience of issues.[5]. Only recently have agenda-setting researchers considered duration of media coverage as central to the agenda-setting process.[6]

If an optimal time lag for the media agenda to influence the public agenda could be determined, it would be valuable for academic researchers designing media effects studies and applied researchers planning campaign studies. Not surprisingly, time-related agenda-setting studies have not located a single optimal time lag for the media agenda to influence the public agenda because different issues have different time frames. The research indicates lags ranging from a few days to a few months to years. The majority of studies indicate lags of several months.[7]

A recent time-series study that examined the effects German television coverage of 16 issues on citizen assessments of issue importance reported time lags ranging from one to two weeks.[8] Aware that their findings were at variance with most of the research, the researchers suggested three levels of agenda setting with different lags: (1) general ideas or perspectives such as the environment, which may take years to register on the public agenda (long-term effects); (2) general issues such as taxes, which may take several months to influence the public agenda (mid-term effects); and (3) topical events such as terrorist incidents, which may register almost immediately on the public agenda.[9] Another recent study reported virtually no time lag at all.[10] Eaton's study comparing bi-weekly media data of combined newspaper, news magazine, and television content with that of 13 Gallup Polls over a four-year period reported that the greatest response to media coverage was at the time of communication.

Perhaps more important than locating the optimal duration for the media agenda to influence the public agenda is the discovery of patterns of media influence on the public. Salwen examined media coverage of seven environmental issues (i.e., air pollution, water pollution, and so forth) in three local and regional daily newspapers circulated in the Lansing, Michigan, area with Lansing area residents' evaluations of the importance of these environmental issues.[11] As Salwen drew backward in time in cumulating week-long intervals, the correlations between the media agenda and the public agenda indicated a pattern of rapidly increasing, peaking, and slowly declining correlations. Salwen reported a time lag of eight to ten weeks. But more important than the time lag, Salwen suggested that the agenda-setting process involved rapid learning of issue salience from the media and relatively slow decay.

From his findings, Salwen argued that continuous media coverage of an issue over time may "transmit a subtle message (to the public) concerning the legitimacy of the issue. The very fact that an issue has survived the test of time in the news media while other issues have come and gone may communicate to the public that the issue is worth putting high on the public agenda of issue priorities."[12]

Agenda setting researchers have discovered that there may be different dimensions of public evaluations of issue salience or "importance." For instance, researchers have measured the "intrapersonal agenda" (personal importance), the "interpersonal agenda" (importance for discussion), and the "perceived community agenda."[13] Atwater, Salwen and Anderson included a measure of perceived media salience.[14] Their results indicated that the public could accurately assess the media agenda of issue priorities when directly asked to do so. These studies highlight the importance of carefully determining what is meant by issue salience.

In the present study, issue importance proved to be problematic. The public does not ordinarily evaluate foreign nations by their "importance." To ask respondents what is "the most important foreign nation" would be confuse respondents and raise validity questions. Although the agenda-setting concept clearly encompasses people and places as well as issues, the research to date has generally been limited to broad issues and specific events.

To deal with this problem, respondents in this study were asked to evaluate foreign nations along simple evaluative dimensions of friends, enemies, dangerous places, and amount of coverage. Obviously, public evaluations of nations along these dimensions would not be expected to be a function of amount or frequency of media coverage, but some context of coverage. In the only agenda-setting study to date that specifically considered the effects of context of media coverage on public evaluations of issues, Iyengar and his colleagues experimentally manipulated television news exposure to issues.[15] They discovered that the greater the subjects' exposure to the issue of U.S. military unpreparedness, the more negative the evaluations of then-president Jimmy Carter.

As a result of the questions raised in this discussion, three hypotheses were tested:

H1: As the public agenda is drawn backward in time from the media agenda, the public agenda of foreign nations will increase, peak, and decline relative to media coverage of foreign nations.

H2: As the public agenda is drawn backward in time from the media agenda, the rate of initial increase will be greater than the subsequent rate of decline.

H3: News media coverage of foreign nations as enemies of the United States will increase evaluations of nations as enemies.

H4: News media coverage of foreign nations as friends of the United States will increase evaluations of nations as friends.

H5: News media coverage of foreign nations as dangerous places will increase evaluations of nations as dangerous places.

METHOD

A representative sample of 629 residents in Dade County, Florida (the Miami metropolitan area, pop. 2 million), was contacted by telephone during the evenings of May 1 to May 4, 1989. Respondents were interviewed by bilingual callers in the language of their choice (English or Spanish). Three attempts were made to contact respondents. The response rate was 79 percent. The racial and ethnic make-up of the sample mirrored the county, with about 52 percent of the respondents identifying themselves as white, 34 percent as of Spanish origin (including white Hispanics and black Hispanics), and 12 percent as African-American. Respondents were asked four open-ended questions as to which foreign country in they believed is (1) America's best friend (friend), (2) America's worst enemy (enemy), (3) the most reported foreign nation in the news media (coverage), and (4) the most dangerous country in which to live (danger).

A content analysis of all the international news stories appearing in the three evening network news broadcasts (ABC, CBS, and NBC), the national edition of the New York Times, and the final edition of the daily Miami Herald (circulation 420,000 daily and 520,000 Sunday), was conducted for a nine-week duration from February 27 to May 1. The content analysis concluded the evening the telephone surveys began. Although the previous research on the temporal process in agenda setting is not consistent, the research suggests that nine weeks of media coverage is sufficient to analyze media content before conducting the survey of the public.[16]

During the nine-week media duration of this study, there were a number of continuing news stories that began before the the content analysis started, including the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, the continuing civil war in Afghanistan after the Soviet troop withdrawal on February 15, stalled Middle East peace efforts, and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's rapid pace of reform. There were also a number of new international events, including rioting in Venezuela following government price hikes (February 27), the election of rightist candidate Alfredo Cristiani in El Salvador followed by rebel gun battles (March 17), Gorbachev's visit to Cuba (April 2), Polish government recognition of the Solidarity trade union and its decision to hold free elections (April 5), the beginning of student demonstrations in China following the death of reformer Hu Yaobang (April 15), and Japanese Premier Noboru Takeshita's resignation in connection with a major stock market scandal (April 25). In other words, the international news agenda during course of this study was much like that in any other period, with continuing news stories and new events.

Each of the television networks has one or more affiliates in Dade county. The Herald is the leading daily newspaper in the county and it enjoys considerable national prestige.[17] The Times was included for its undisputed national and international prestige.[18] All the international stories appearing in the network broadcasts were coded. International stories were defined as stories that dealt primarily with events in or about nations other than the United States. Although international stories may have involved the United States, at least one foreign nation also had to be included. Only the international stories appearing within the first three pages of the newspapers were coded because there are more stories in newspapers than on television news. In addition, it has been asserted that the news content of television news broadcasts is roughly equivalent to the news in the front page of a newspaper.[19]

Since this study redefines issue salience to include how the public thinks about foreign nations, an attempt was made to link how foreign nations were reported in the news media with how the nations are evaluated by the public. Unfortunately, attempts to code nations as friends or enemies of the United States yielded low levels of inter-coder reliability. It appears that the news media do not explicitly report foreign nations as friends or enemies of the United States. However, the attempt to code foreign nations as dangerous places proved more fruitful. The construct of danger was conceived in terms of conflict. Numerous content analyses of U.S. press coverage of foreign nations indicate that much of the coverage of foreign nations is marked by conflict, particularly that of developing nations.[20]

Critics assert that conflictive coverage of foreign nations in the news contributes to negative public evaluations of foreign lands and peoples. These assertions are usually drawn from analyses of media content without audience surveys or intuitive assessments. A review of agenda-setting research by McCombs and Gilbert reported that only a single unpublished study reported in 1977 directly linked issue conflict to agenda setting. The study reported that con[illegible]s media coverage of the 1974 Indiana senatorial campaign heightened public awareness of issues.[21]

A story was defined as conflictive if it reported "disagreements between or among parties." This included everything from simple disputes and disagreements to political or criminal violence. For a story to be coded as conflictive, it had to contain only aspects of conflict and no aspects of consensus (agreements between or among parties). If a story could not be coded as conflictive, it was coded as non-conflictive. Thus, the non-conflictive measure was not equivalent to consensus, but the absence of conflict. The decision to define and code stories simply as conflictive or non-conflictive had to do partly with obtaining a reasonable measure of reliability. In addition, a more detailed measure was not needed for this study.[22]

RESULTS

A total of 613 network news stories (240 on CBS, 200 on NBC, and 173 on ABC) were analyzed. Most of the stories involved one foreign nation (n = 413), 162 involved two nations, 38 involved three nations, for a total of 851 foreign nations. A total of 991 newspaper stories (532 in the *Herald* and 459 in *The Times*) were analyzed. Most of the stories involved only one foreign nation (n = 713), 240 involved two nations, 38 involved three nations, for a total of 1,307 foreign nations. In total, 2,158 nations were coded in both media.

Although there are hundreds of nations in the world, the public's agenda of salient foreign nations is limited. Therefore, the public agenda of salient foreign nations was limited to those nations receiving at least six mentions on at least one of the four agendas (friend, enemy, coverage, or danger). In each of the public agenda measures, about 10 percent of the respondents volunteered a "don't know" or "none" response, or refused to answer the question. Another 10 percent gave invalid responses (e.g., U.S. cities, states or commonwealth possessions, regions, or continents). This procedure resulted in a public agenda of twenty-four nations. The salient nations and their frequencies and ranks in each of the four agendas are reported in Table 1.[23]

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Table 1 About Here

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The data in Table 1 indicate that a few nations dominated each agenda. On the friend agenda, in particular, Great Britain received more mentions than the other 23 salient nations combined (N = 298). It was followed by Canada (N = 79) and Israel (N = 39). The enemy agenda was dominated by the Soviet Union (N = 177), Iran (N = 125), and Cuba (N = 96). The Soviet Union (N = 149) topped the coverage agenda, followed by Israel (N = 89), and Nicaragua (N = 80). Lebanon (N = 119) and Iran (N = 108) topped the danger agenda.

The correlation matrix of the media and public agendas reported in Table 2 indicates that the public evaluates foreign nations along different dimensions. As would be expected, the friend and enemy agendas were negatively correlated (-.40, p < .05). The friend and danger agendas were also negatively correlated (-.56, p < .01). The danger and enemy agendas were positively correlated (.58, p < .01). The friend and coverage agendas were not correlated (.08, NS). All pairings of the enemy, coverage, and danger agendas were positively correlated (p < .01).

Table 2 also indicates that the newspaper agenda and network agenda were strongly correlated (.86, p < .01). As a result of the strong correlation between the two media agendas, the two media content were combined and treated as a single media agenda measure. The media agenda is reported in Table 2.

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Table 2 About Here

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To examine the time-related hypotheses in this study, Table 3 reports the cumulative week-by-week correlations of each of the four public agenda measures with the media agenda. The Week 1 media agenda represents the week of media coverage preceding the survey (April 24-May 1). The Week 2 agenda represents the two weeks of cumulated media coverage preceding the survey (April 17-May 1). This method of cumulation of media coverage continued for the entire nine-week duration. Because there are so many correlations reported in Table 3, interpretations of the findings focused on temporal trends rather than statistical significance alone.

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Table 3 About Here

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The friend and enemy agendas indicate slight evidence for increasing correlations during the first two or three weeks of media coverage. By Week 3, the correlations stabilized and indicated no discernible trend for peaking and decreasing.

The coverage agenda, however, indicates evidence for a generally rising and peaking trend of correlations over time (even though there is a slight decrease from Week 2 to Week 3). Week 9 dips slightly to .65 from the previous week's .68. If the correlations were extended to additional weeks, it is possible that this dip may have continued and indicated a trend of decay. The nine-week time frame may have been insufficient to indicate decay.

The danger agenda also provides evidence of an increasing trend of media influence on public evaluations of foreign nations. During Week 1, the relationship was negative (rho = -.26). The correlations hovered about zero by the second (rho = -.06) and third (rho = -.05) weeks. During Weeks 4 to 8, the correlations steadily increased from .13 to .32. The first indication of decreasing correlations occurred during Week 9. The enemy and danger agendas follow the predicted increasing and peaking effects. The slight downturn in Week 9 on both the enemy and coverage agendas may have indicated the first signs of decay.

The media agenda of conflictive coverage is presented in Table 4. Two types of rankings of conflictive coverage are reported: (1) frequency of conflictive stories and (2) proportion of conflictive stories. These two rankings were computed because the potential of conflictive news coverage in influencing public salience of foreign nations might be a function of either sheer frequency or proportion of conflictive news coverage about foreign nations.

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TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

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There are some distinct differences in the rankings of the two conflictive agendas. In frequency, Israel, the Soviet Union, and Lebanon received the most conflictive coverage. As proportions of coverage, however, a little more than half of Israel's coverage is conflictive (56%), ranking Israel tenth among the nations. Only 26% of the coverage dealing with the Soviet Union was conflictive, ranking it near the bottom of the list. Lebanon, however, ranked third in frequency of conflictive coverage and second in proportion of conflictive coverage. Table 5 reports the correlations of the four public agendas with the two conflictive agendas.

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TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

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The two conflict agendas yielded some distinct differences with the public agenda measures of friend and coverage. The friend agenda was negatively correlated with the proportion of conflictive coverage (-.54, p < .01) while it was not correlated with frequency (-.04, NS). On the other hand, the coverage agenda was positively correlated with frequency of conflictive coverage (.52, p < .01) while it was not correlated with proportion (.16, NS). The enemy and danger agendas were positively correlated with both conflict agendas.

DISCUSSION

This study traced the agenda-setting "process" by examining changes in public evaluations of foreign nations over time in relation to news media coverage of foreign nations. This study also linked public evaluations of foreign nations to conflictive media coverage of foreign nations. The results indicate evidence of changes in the public assessments of foreign nations as dangerous places. However, there was less evidence indicating that media coverage of foreign nations influences public assessments of foreign nations as "friends" or "enemies" of the United States.

These results are significant in the context of agenda setting and international news research because public evaluations of foreign nations as friends or enemies may be relatively enduring evaluations that are not easily susceptible to changes in news media coverage. For instance, despite media coverage of improved relations with the Soviet Union during the time frame of this study, the Soviet Union still topped the list as America's worst enemy. The fact that Great Britain and Canada, two English-speaking nations with close cultural and historical ties with the United States, were rated America's best friends also indicates the relatively enduring nature of the public's evaluations of foreign nations as friends or enemies.

This is not to say that the news media coverage of foreign nations cannot influence public evaluations of foreign nations as friends or enemies. But more than just the sheer frequency of coverage is needed for the news media to influence public evaluations of these relatively enduring assessments. Since this study redefined salience to include public evaluations of foreign nations, instead of traditional "importance," an attempt was made to link media contexts and portrayals of foreign nations to public evaluations of foreign nations. In this regard, conflictive news coverage increased public evaluations of nations as enemies and dangerous places and may have decreased evaluations of foreign nations as friends.

Finally, the data also affirmed previous research that the public can, when asked, assess the frequency of coverage in the media agenda. This is no small matter. If the media have an agenda-setting influence on the public, it would be a _sin qua non_ for the public to be able to assess the frequency of coverage of issues, nations, or people.

FOOTNOTES

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videotaped and coded each of the network broadcasts. A random sample of one-third of the broadcasts from each network was re-coded. Inter-coder agreement was 89 percent. Inter-coder agreement of stories as conflictive and non-conflictive was 90 percent.

23 Although the public agenda generally reflected the nations that received substantial media coverage, some nations received modest media coverage and yet failed to meet the criteria of this study for a place on the public agenda. In particular, Poland (n = 41) received almost as much media coverage as Iran and yet failed to meet the criteria for a place on the public agenda. Seven other nations received twenty or more mentions in the media agenda and yet failed to appear on the public agenda (Jordan, n = 24; Venezuela, n = 24; Yugoslavia, n = 24; Chile, n = 22; India, n = 21; Egypt, n = 20; and Spain, n = 20).

Table 1
Public Rankings of Salient Foreign Nations*

FRIEND			ENEMY		
Nation	N	Rank		N	Rank
Great Britain	298	(1)	USSR	177	(1)
Canada	78	(2)	Iran	125	(2)
Israel	39	(3)	Cuba	96	(3)
France	16	(4)	Libya	47	(4)
W. Germany	12	(5)	Nicaragua	22	(5)
Japan	10	(6)	Japan	15	(6)
China (PRC)	7	(7)	Syria	14	(7)
Colombia	6	(8)	Lebanon	13	(8)
Mexico	6	(9)	Panama	7	(9)
Costa Rica	6	(10)	China (PRC)	6	(11)
			Saudi Arabia	6	(11)
			Israel	6	(11)

COVERAGE			DANGER		
Nation	N	Rank		N	Rank
USSR	149	(1)	Lebanon	119	(1)
Israel	89	(2)	Iran	108	(2)
Nicaragua	80	(3)	Nicaragua	52	(3)
Cuba	37	(4)	Cuba	50	(4)
Iran	33	(5)	USSR	43	(5)
Japan	30	(6)	Israel	39	(6)
Great Britain	25	(7)	South Africa	21	(7)
China (PRC)	21	(8)	Libya	18	(8)
Lebanon	17	(9)	El Salvador	14	(9)
Panama	16	(10)	Haiti	13	(10)
South Africa	11	(11)	Colombia	10	(11)
Libya	8	(12)	South Korea	7	(12.5)
			Panama	7	(12.5)
			Afghanistan	6	(14)

*Nations receiving six or more mentions.

Table 2
Correlation Matrix Among the Media and Public Agendas*

VARIABLE	Network	Friend	Enemy	Coverage	Danger
Media	XXX	.18	.30	.56*	.22
Newspaper	.86*	.14	.23	.50*	.19
Network	---	.31	.31	.65*	.28
Friend	---	---	-.40*	.08	-.56*
Enemy	---	---	---	.63*	.58*
Coverage	---	---	---	---	.54*

* Spearman-rho rank-order correlation. With N = 24, a correlation of .34 is needed to achieve significance at p < .05; a correlation of .49 is needed to achieve significance at p < .01.

Table 3
Accumulating Weeks of Correlations*

WEEK	Friend	Enemy	Coverage	Danger
1	.16	.27	.25	-.26
2	.24	.27	.46*	-.06
3	.30	.37*	.42*	-.05
4	.28	.36*	.47*	.13
5	.27	.35*	.50*	.16
6	.23	.31	.52*	.21
7	.27	.31	.59*	.24
8	.27	.33	.68*	.32
9	.31	.31	.65*	.28

* Spearman-rho rank-order correlation. With N = 24, a correlation of .34 is needed to achieve significance at $p < .05$; a correlation of .49 is needed to achieve significance at $p < .01$.

Table 4

Correlation Matrix Among the Media and Public Agendas

VARIABLE	Network	Friend	Enemy	Coverage	Danger
Media	---	.18	.30	.56*	.22
Newspaper	.86*	.14	.23	.50*	.19
Network	---	.31	.31	.65*	.28
Friend	---	---	-.40*	.08	-.56*
Enemy	---	---	---	.63*	.58*
Coverage	---	---	---	---	.54*

* Spearman-rho rank-order correlation. With N = 24, a correlation co-efficient of .34 is needed to achieve significance at $p < .05$; a correlation of .49 is needed to achieve significance at $p < .01$.

TABLE 5
Correlations with the Conflict Agendas

	Frequency	Proportion
Friend	-.04	-.54*
Enemy	.37*	.40*
Coverage	.52*	.16
Danger	.37*	.46*

* Spearman-rho rank-order correlation. With N = 24, a correlation co-efficient of .34 is needed to achieve significance at p < .05; a correlation of .49 is needed to achieve significance at p < .01.

Political Commentary in Cuban Broadcasting, 1959-1960

By
Michael B. Salwen

Paper presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, 1990.

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ABSTRACT

Political Commentary in Cuban Broadcasting, 1959-1960

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Paper presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, 1990.

This paper examines events in Cuba leading to the government expropriaton of private broadcasting. It includes personal interviews with political commentators and station owners at the largest radio and television network in Cuba, CMQ. CMQ, which was expropriated by the government in September 1960, was the last private broadcasting network in Cuba. Attention is given to the political commentators who used inflammatory rhetoric to attack their opponents and further their political ambitions.

Political Commentary in Cuban Broadcasting, 1959-1960

When Cuban Premier Fidel Castro consolidated his power over the island's broadcast media in September 1960, Cuba had a sophisticated television system of 23 stations, more than any other nation in Latin America.[1] While broadcasting was one of many private industries to be nationalized, several observers have noted broadcasting's special place in the Cuban revolution. The government's coordinated use of television to promote the revolution, has received a good deal of attention. The New York Times journalist and chronicler of the Cuban revolution Herbert Matthews summed up this fascination with ~~the~~ Castro's use of television as "government by television."[2] This attention to the Cuban government's use of television to further the revolution has diverted scholarly examination of the broadcast system that existed before the government consolidation of the broadcast media. It is a matter of some irony that the very broadcast media that Castro used as a podium to attack free enterprise was built by a social, political, and economic system that epitomized the best and worst of "free-wheeling" capitalism.[3].

When scholars discuss broadcasting in Cuba before the consolidation of the broadcasting system, they usually stress the "corruption" and "irresponsibility" of the broadcasters.[4] For instance, Cuban broadcast media scholar John Spicer Nichols described the Cuban broadcast media before Castro as "seedy, censored, venal puppets of government and industry"[5]. The left-leaning sociologist C. Wright Mills claimed that Cuba's pre-revolutionary press "was just part of (Cuban President Gen. Fulgencio) Batista's ruling gang"[6] Implicit in these blanket criticisms is the suggestion that the expropriation of private media was at least understandable if not partially justified.

There is no question that the Batista government which preceded Castro tried -- often with success -- to compromise the Cuban news media. It has been estimated that by the end of 1958 the Batista government was paying out nearly $500,000 (U.S.) a month in bribes to journalists.[7] Batista had outright purchased the newspapers Pueblo and Gente and the Circuito Nacional Cuba radio station, operated by Batista's son-in-law.[8] (FN 7, Thomas, 1971, p. 1136). In addition, the Batista government held a firm grip over many aspects of the national economy, making the media highly dependent on government advertising revenue.[9] But by no means were all media compromised. Those media that were Batista organs before the revolution were taken over by the government during the first few weeks after Batista fled the country on December 31, 1958. In most cases, these station owners fled Cuba when Batista fled. Most broadcast owners who had endured Batista's incessant on-again, off-again censorship joined in the national celebration when Batista fled the island.

This study will focus on how Cuba's leading privately owned radio and television network, CMQ, operated in the often unstable political, economic, and social conditions during the years immediately before and up to the government expropriation of private broadcasting. Although CMQ was not representative of most Cuban broadcast networks, as the pre-eminent radio and television network in Cuba it is worth examining how CMQ. This study will focus on the news and public affairs programming in Cuban broadcasting.

The first section, "When the Revolution Comes," will provide context on the conditions that shaped political commentary broadcasting before the 1959 Revolution. The second section, "When the Revolution Came," will focus on the crucial period from January 1959, when Castro's government came to power, to September 1960, when the last privately operated radio and television network in Cuba, the CMQ broadcasting organization, was expropriated by the government. This study makes use of previous research, newspaper articles, trade publications, and personal communications.

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

When radio came to Cuba in the 1920s and 1930s, politicians were as quick to recognize the value of the new medium as politicians in the United States and Europe. Many political commentators either previously or presently held political office, or aspired to political office. It is not surprising then that political commentary on Cuban radio adopted the strident rhetoric associated with Cuban politics. Even the media owners who sponsored these programs conceded that the commentators' frequently transgressed acceptable standards when attacking their opponents.

On August 9, 1950, legislative action was taken to solve the problem of "irresponsible" political broadcasters. Cuba approved the world's first law granting anyone maligned on radio to petition the Ministry of Communications for a right to reply to the attacks.[10] If the Ministry found in favor of the petitioner, the person had to be granted airtime to rebut the charges. Cuban broadcast station owners and political commentators vigorously fought the law. They charged that the law would be abused by President Carlos Prio Socarras, who was frequently the target of the commentators' attacks.[11]

Since 1945, CMQ radio carried the Sunday evening broadcasts of Sen. Eduardo Chibas, who was notorious for his scathing radio attacks against President Prio and members of his government. Chibas, who lost a presidential bid to Prio two years earlier, was widely regarded as a leading presidential contender in the 1952 election.[12]. Goar Mestre, the head of CMQ, joined the protest against granting the executive branch the authority to regulate broadcasting. Even Mestre conceded that Chibas' allegations over CMQ radio were often unfounded. But as a leading public figure, Mestre argued, Chibas had a right to be heard.

Mestre claimed that Cuban radio stations generally granted persons attacked in political commentary programs a right to reply on the air even though the stations were not legally required to do so. Mestre added: "It is true that for years we have suffered from verbal gangsterism on the radio. But the solution of the problem is to give citizens protection through streamlined libel laws, which should replace our present antiquated legislation, and not by regulations which throw the burden on the radio stations."[13]

As it was, the law was rarely enforced and political commentators continued to wantonly attack their opponents. In March 1952, a military coup led by Gen. Batista forced Prio into exile. At least during the first five years of his government, Batista preferred to deal with a critical media by bribing journalists and covertly funding media organizations rather than publicly cracking down on the press.

Despite the many stories of Batista's harsh censorship of the press, there are numerous examples of public criticism of Batista by the commentators before 1956. In 1957, Batista instituted a series of measures against the press after Castro's rebel troops launched embarrassing attacks against the government.[14] In October 1955, when syndicated U.S. columnist Drew Pearson visited Cuba and publicly praised Batista, the Cuban media attacked Pearson in sometimes scathing terms. Jose Pardo Llada, a popular commentator on Union Radio's "la Palabra" ("the Word"), charged that "our illustrious friend Drew Pearson has defrauded us."[15] When Pearson was quoted in the Cuban press as saying that Batista ruled with only limited force, Luis Conte Aguero, a popular radio commentator on Radio Progreso and a columnist in Diario Nacional, wrote in his column that Person's comments were "too ridiculous to comment."[16]

Political Commentary on Television

Cuba was the third nation in Latin America to adopt privately operated television. Mexico, Brazil, and Cuba each officially adopted the medium within a 60-day period in 1951.[17]. CMQ-TV Channel 6, which officially went on the air on March 12, was started by the Mestre brothers: Goar, the president; and Abel, the chairman of the board. The eldest brother, Augusto Luis, died a month before Castro came to power. Augusto Luis never got deeply involved in CMQ's affairs, and instead concerned himself with the more than twenty other Mestre-owned businesses on the island.

CMQ did not start Cuba's first television station. Gaspar Pumarejo, a former CMQ employee who left CMQ radio on bad terms during the mid-1940s and purchased Union Radio, raced to get Cuba's first television station on the air in October, Union Radio-TV Channel 12.[18]. Goar Mestre claims that Pumarejo rushed to get Union Radio-TV on the air to deprive the Mestre brothers of the honor of having Cuba's first television station.[19]

The Mestre brothers went into radio broadcasting as a result of their advertising needs. Their advertising agency, Publicidad Mestre y Godoy (later called Publicidad Mestre and later Publicidad Mestre y Conill, as different owners joined the business), a research-oriented advertising agency was started in 1941. Goar convinced his brothers to purchase CMQ radio in 1943 because he was upset by the widespread practice of broadcasters who would attempt to cheat the Mestre brothers' advertising clients out of broadcast spots:

> I was troubled by the fact that in those days in Cuba you would buy, let's say, fifty spots, and you would try to monitor that and you would discover that sometimes they would give you fifty spots, but more often than not they would give you thirty or thirty-five. You would go visit the station owner, fight with him for a while and then he would give you more than the fifty you contracted. It was all very messy.[20]

The Mestre brothers built CMQ into Cuba's highest rated radio and television network during most time spots. As a conscious decision that began during the early 1940s, CMQ decided to put Goar into the public spotlight so that the public could identify CMQ with a voice on radio and later a face in television.[21] As a result, Goar's voice and face were both well known. During the 1944 and 1948 presidential elections, Goar gained nationwide publicity for himself and CMQ when he appeared on radio with the presidential candidates when CMQ provided the candidates airtime to express their views. CMQ planned to repeat its successful idea to air the views of the presidential candidates during the 1952 election, but the election was suspended by Gen. Batista's March 10 coup.[22]

By the time Castro came to power, CMQ-TV was an eight-station television network interconnected by 18 microwave relay stations that were owned and operated by CMQ. In 1952, the Mestre brothers acquired CMBF-TV Channel 7. In 1955, CMBF-TV expanded into a seven-station network. By the time Castro came to power in 1959, Cuba had 24 television stations, 15 of which were owned by the Mestre brothers. In Latin America, Mexico was a distant second to Cuba with 15 stations.[23] As a result, Cuba was "the first country in the world where television was available to the entire population."[24]. Although one can only speculate, it is possible that had not political events led to the demise of CMQ,-TV, CMQ might have become one of Latin America's premier television networks, equivalent to Brazil's TV Globo or Mexico's Televisa. Today TV Globo and Televisa are the third and fourth largest privately operated television networks in the world, respectively, behind the three commercial networks in the United States.[25] CMQ-TV's stations alone virtually reached the entire island. Figures 1 and 2 present circa late 1950s CMQ advertising material illustrating CMQ-TV and radio's signal reach.

....

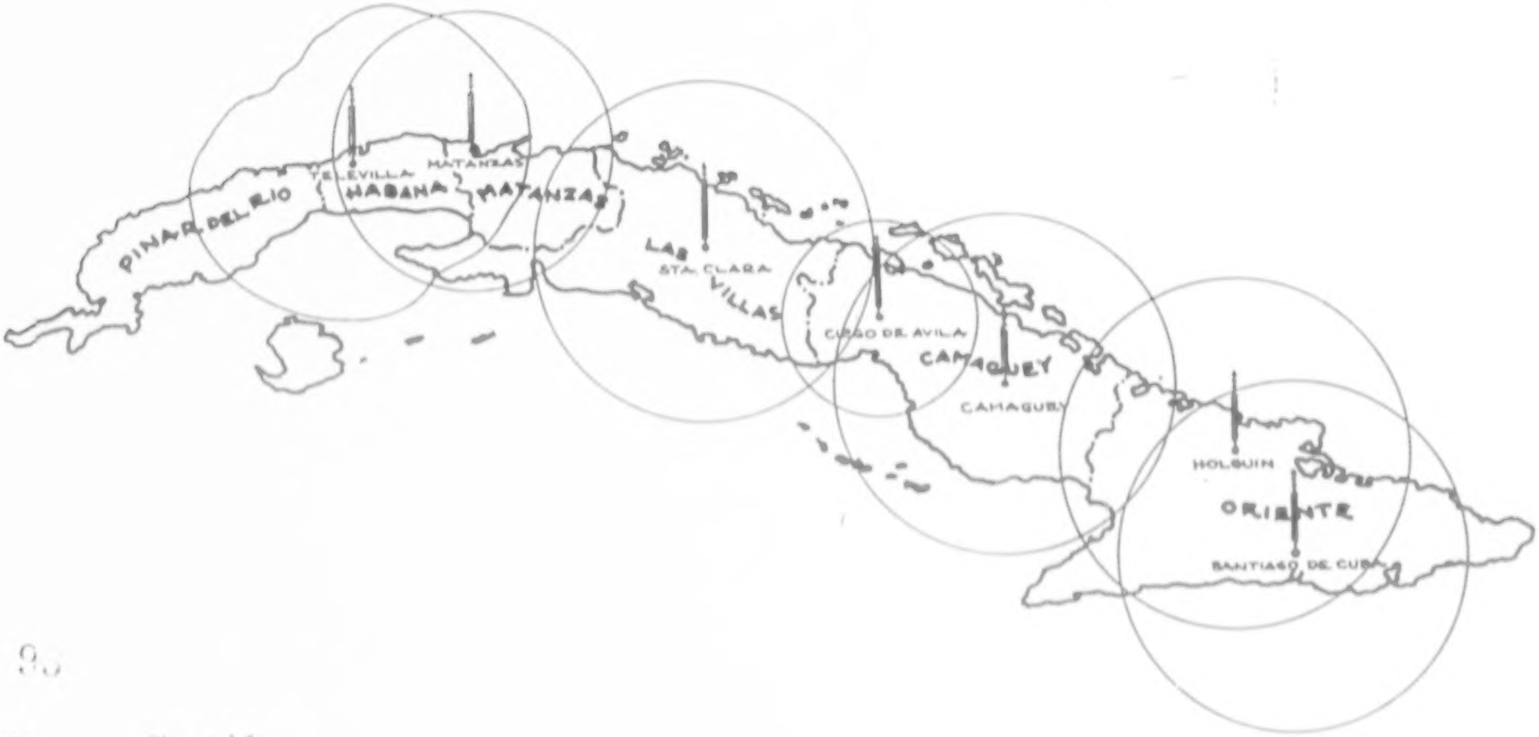
Figures 1 and 2 About Here

....

CMQ-TV scored a major publicity coup in 1954 by carrying live broadcasts of the U.S. World Series in Cuba. To accomplish the then unheard of feat, CMQ rented a DC-3 aircraft equipped with two antenna and a $14,000 RCA transmitter. The plane circled 8,500 feet over the Florida Keys and relayed the signal back to CMQ-TV's Channel 9 in Matanzas, where it was transmitted throughout the island.[26] The event, hailed as the first live intentional broadcast from one nation to another (there were unintentional spillover broadcasts across national borders before this date), preceded a similar attempt by the U.S. television network NBC to air live programs from Cuba to the United States by two years.[27] While the event satiated most Cubans' interest in American baseball, Abel says that he and

FIGURE 1

CMQ—TV NETWORK COVERAGE

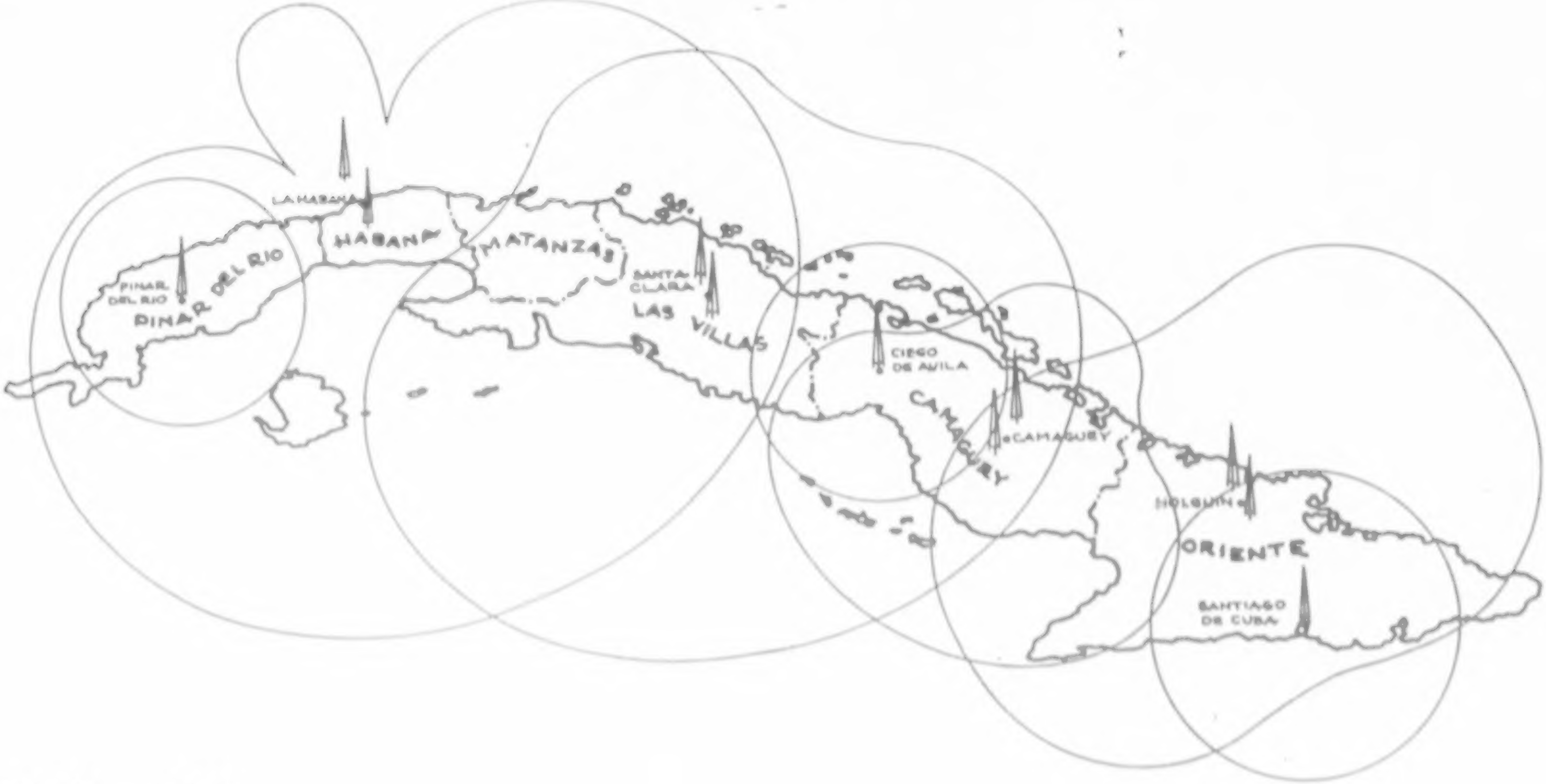

TELEVILLA
MATANZAS
PINAR DEL RIO
HABANA
MATANZAS
LAS VILLAS
STA. CLARA
CIEGO DE AVILA
CAMAGUEY
CAMAGUEY
HOLGUIN
ORIENTE
SANTIAGO DE CUBA

HAVANA	Channel 6
MATANZAS	Channel 9
SANTA CLARA	Channel 5
CAMAGUEY	Channel 6
HOLGUIN	Channel 3
STGO. DE CUBA	Channel 2
•PINAR DEL RIO	Channel 3
•CIEGO DE AVILA	Channel 7

United States Sales Office
CARIBBEAN NETWORKS, INC.
20 WEST 43rd STREET
NEW YORK 36, N. Y.
LOngacre 5-7840

FIGURE 2

CMQ—RADIO NETWORK COVERAGE


LA HABANA
HABANA
PINAR DEL RIO
PINAR DEL RIO
MATANZAS
SANTA CLARA
LAS VILLAS
CIEGO DE AVILA
CAMAGUEY
CAMAGUEY
HOLGUIN
ORIENTE
SANTIAGO DE CUBA

PINAR DEL RIO	920 kc
HAVANA	630 kc
SANTA CLARA	640 kc
CIEGO DE AVILA	900 kc
CAMAGUEY	920 kc
HOLGUIN	740 kc
STGO. DE CUBA	630 kc
SHORTWAVE	9,670 kc

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CARIBBEAN NETWORKS, INC.
20 WEST 43rd STREET
NEW YORK 36, N. Y.
LOngacre 5-7840

Goar worried throughout the broadcasts. If the games ran long into extra innings, forcing the plane to land to refuel, the game would be cut off the air just as public interest in the game was its height.[28]

Although the live broadcast of the World Series in Cuba was meant to boost CMQ's ratings, it was also part of a larger plan to gain publicity for CMQ.[29] Abel Mestre says that CMQ and other radio and television broadcasters regularly sought publicity in the press. Union Radio-TV's Gaspar Pumarejo, who raced to beat CMQ to the air with Cuba's first television broadcasts, was CMQ's main competitor. In 1957, Pumarejo started airing color broadcasts, making Cuba the first nation outside the United States with color television.[30] Pumarejo purchased an RCA color transmitter and arranged to install it on the roof of the Havana Hilton Hotel across the street from the CMQ building. The value of color television was questionable since few receivers were color compatible. But questionable or not, it certainly captured public attention.[31]

Cuban journalists were notorious for accepting bribes in return for favorable coverage. Abel Mestre is brutally honest about the questionable ethics behind some of CMQ's activities to capture public attention, including the then common practice of paying reporters for favorable coverage about CMQ.[32] He concedes that much of the information that appeared in Cuban newspapers and trade publications, some of which made its way to U.S. trade publications, is often exaggerated:

> It was something very nice at the time to increase ratings, but not necessarily the actual truth. Much of this was what we told the public, and that naturally favored CMQ's position. Most of this information was true in many respects, although exaggerated. . . . We paid for that type of information in the newspapers. We treated those reporters very nicely, in many cases we even paid them. So it was propaganda that we created.[33]

The most popular programs on Cuban radio and television were light entertainment fare. Drama programs, Latin American-style telenovelas, and children's programming were also popular.[34] Despite the popularity of entertainment programs, the Mestre brothers claimed a social commitment to news and public affairs programming. But being the entrepreneurs that they were, the Mestre brothers hoped to make a profit in news and public affairs programming.

The Mestres met with success in radio news programming when they established Radio Reloj (Radio Clock), the first 24-hour, all-news radio station. Radio Reloj began operating in July 1947, airing 18 hours a day. It expanded to 24 hours in September 1947.[35] Radio Reloj's rapid-fire format with news flashes and national and international news packed between commercials required a team of as many as a dozen announcers. Every minute of Radio Reloj consisted of forty seconds of news packaged around ten seconds of advertising before and after the news, with an announcement of the time calibrated with the National Observatory. A clock constantly ticked in the background. Radio Reloj was so popular that that it is still on the air in Cuba today without the commercials. Many Latin

American stations use Radio Reloj's format today. Miami's WQBA uses the format during part of its daily broadcasts.

Until CMQ concentrated all its operations in a modern 10-story Radiocentro complex in 1948, Radio Reloj was located in a shed on the roof of CMQ's building. The ventilation was so bad that the announcers worked in their underwear most of the time and women were not permitted in the studio-shack. When the Radiocentro building was built, pubic interest in Radio Reloj was so great that CMQ operated Radio Reloj from an arcade behind glass panels so that curious members of the public could watch.[36]

The Mestre brothers met with success in television public affairs programming with "Ante la Prensa" ("Meet the Press"). The program, which went on the air in 1951, was "an outright copy of the NBC program" in the United States with the same name.[37] The program was moderated by Dr. Jorge Manach, a leading Cuban man of letters. A panel of respected journalists interviewed important political figures about important issues of the day. In addition to success in news and public affairs, the program also gave the Mestre brothers a number of political troubles with the Prio, and later Batista and Castro governments.[38] After Castro came to power, CMQ scored a coup by providing the popular radio commentator Conte Aguero with a daily program. Castro himself appeared on the program several times.

The "Father" of Political Broadcast Commentary

If leading political commentators on Cuban radio during the 1940so and 1950so seemed uniformly vitriolic, it was because they followed the model established by the populist, Send. Adored ("Eddy") Chablis. Chibas was a member of the leading Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Autentico) until 1947, when he led the breakaway Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo). He enjoyed an unusual reputation among Cuban politicians as an honest, if somewhat eccentric, individual sincerely concerned about the nation's poor.[39]

The fiercely anti-Communist Chibas, whose slogan was "Shame of Money," had a cadre of young followers that included Castro, Pardo Llada, and Conte Aguero.[40] Since 1945, CMQ provided the colorful Chibas with his own half hour program every Sunday evening. These programs took the form of political rallies in which Chibas accused Prio and high government officials of corruption.

The Ortodoxo party was supposed to pay CMQ to carry the program. Abel Mestre says that CMQ all but wrote off the money as lost.[41] Abel claimed that the publicity associated with carrying the Chibas program was a valuable asset for CMQ. Besides, CMQ charged Cafe Pilon high rates for its advertisements that regularly appeared immediately before and after the Chibas broadcast.

Goar Mestre saw Chibas' program as a problem for CMQ, despite the high ratings.[42] He says CMQ would have liked to have dropped Chibas' program from its broadcast schedule, but, he added, "we did not have the guts" to take such an action which would surely have angered Chibas' followers.[43]

Chibas got into several duels as a result of his broadcast attacks. In all the duels, no one was ever killed or seriously injured and the judges for both dueling parties agreed that Chibas and his opponents came out of the duels with their honor intact. The first recorded duel was in April 1947 with President Prio's brother. Francisco Prio challenged Chibas to pistols after Chibas had accused him of having business connections with the American gangster Charles ("Lucky") Luciano. At the time, the Cuban government was in the process of deporting Luciano from Cuba. Four months later, Chibas fought a saber duel with President Prio himself over one of Chibas' broadcast attacks. In 1949, Chibas was sentenced to six months in jail after accusing three judges of accepting bribes from the Cuban Electric Company. He was pardoned by President Prio after serving one month.[44]

Chibas had a habit of running over his allotted time, which infuriated Goar Mestre.[45] CMQ station employees would hold signs in front Chibas as he spoke informing him how many minutes had left, but Goar said that Chibas frequently ignored these messages. CMQ had to deal with Chibas delicately; it could not just yank him off the air in mid-sentence without experiencing the wrath of his loyal followers.[46]

During the summer of 1951, Chibas lashed out at Prio's Minister of Education, Dr. Aureliano Sanchez Arango. Chibas accused Sanchez Arango of stealing government funds allocated for school children's breakfasts and investing the money in Guatemalan timber and real estate. Many of Chibas' own followers believed that Chibas may have gone too far this time in launching his attacks.[47]

Sanchez Arango publicly challenged Chibas to prove his charges. Chibas responded with more unsubstantiated allegations but promised to document his allegations in due time. Sanchez Arango kept demanding that Chibas prove his allegations.[48] Chibas' charges were attracting wide public attention. Chibas' program at this time was reputed to have the highest listenership in Cuba.[49]

Chibas' August 5, 1951, program started out no differently than his other programs. The politician, dressed in his Cuban-style guayabera shirt that hung over his pants, took to the microphone as his followers in the audience cheered him on. As Max Lesnik, the Ortodoxo's youth movement leader, remembers that day, there was some tension in the audience.[50] Chibas defended his allegations and, alluding to his lack of evidence, claimed that Galileo was correct when he said that the earth went around the sun even though Galileo lacked sufficient evidence to prove his claim.[51]

One minute before the program went off the air, Chibas reached under his shirt, where a .38 Colt Special was tucked in his pants. His followers knew he carried a pistol for his protection, as did many leading politicians. But they wondered why he pulled it out and started waving it. Then, just as the program went off the air, Chibas shot himself in the stomach. The bullet passed through Chibas' body, shattering a vertebrae, and striking the foot of a youth in the audience.[52] Chibas died of the wound almost two weeks later. The radio audience did not hear the shot. It learned of the suicide attempt in the press later that day.[53]

Goar Mestre was at home listening to what would be Chibas' last speech. He was upset with Chibas for running overtime so many times in the past. He had instructed his station employees to cut Chibas off the air if he ran overtime again.[54] When Chibas was abruptly cut off the air, Goar, like most listeners, did not know that Chibas had shot himself. "Ten minutes later they (CMQ employees) called me and said 'Chibas shot himself in studio number three'," Goar recalls. "They put up all the signs and said they would cut him off. And he didn't think we would dare cut him off that night. And then he gave his talk and shot himself. . . . And I think he shot himself thinking he would survive."[55]

By cutting Chibas off the air, CMQ may have denied Chibas some of the glory that he hoped to reap from the nationally broadcasted suicide attempt, if it was indeed a planned event meant to attract attention. Goar expresses relief that CMQ cut Chibas off the air before the shooting. If the shooting had been aired, with over two million Cubans tuned in, he says it might have caused nationwide panic.[56]

After the shooting, Chibas' followers rushed their leader to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, Chibas was reported to have been more concerned about widespread corruption in Cuban politics than his own condition. He was reported to have said, "I'm dying for my party, for the Cuban people. . . . Now [they] should unite more than ever to defeat this terrible government."[57].

After a grueling eleven days in the hospital in critical condition, that received maximum news exposure, Chibas died on August 16 at the age of 43. Chibas' long suffering and outpouring of public grief, while supporters maintained a vigil outside the hospital, ended with a large funeral procession through Havana on August 17. All regular radio transmissions were suspended and only religious music and information about Chibas was broadcast. The churches were reportedly packed as mourners prayed for Chibas and Havana's balconies were decked with black ribbons. Chibas had become portrayed as a martyr who had died as a result of his despair over widespread political corruption in Cuba.[58]

The Batista Coup

With Chibas dead, the political situation changed. It was widely believed that if the Sanchez Arango affair did not cause Chibas serious political damage, Chibas would have been his party's presidential candidate during the 1952 election.[59] Batista had entered the presidential contest hoping that Chibas and the Autentico candidate, Carlos Hevia, would split the vote, allowing Batista to win with a plurality. With Chibas dead, either an Autentico or, more likely, an Ortodoxo victory seemed assured. Further, with Chibas dead Batista felt confident he could take power in a coup with no credible opposition leader alive who could lead unified opposition against him.[60] On March 10, only weeks before the election, Batista launched his coup.

Many of Chibas' followers went on to become fervent opponents to Batista. Learning from their leader, they would take to the airwaves to lash out against Batista and his policies. Pardo Llada and Conte Aguero were the most prominent political broadcasters trained under Chibas. One former student of Chibas, Fidel Castro, was so disillusioned by Batista's coup that he turned to violence.

After Chibas's death, the Ortodoxo party was led by Roberto Agramonte. Agramonte took over Chibas' CMQ radio program and was the party's presidential candidate in 1952. Castro convinced Agramonte to make ten minutes of the program available to the party's young members. Castro represented these young Ortodoxo members on the air. In addition, in December 1951, Castro launched a program "Voice of the Air" on Radio Alvarez in Havana. Within two months, the program was estimated to have a listenership of about 50,000.[61] At every opportunity on the air, Castro attacked Prio and Batista on the air.

On January 28, 1952, a date intentionally selected by Castro because it was the anniversary of Jose Marti's birth, Castro brought a series of charges against President Prio. Learning from the mistakes of Chibas, each charge was carefully documented. Among the charges, Castro accused Prio of granting amnesty to a friend in prison convicted of child molestation, and then giving the man a government job. Castro preceded each of his five charges, which he brought to the Court of Accounts (a federal administrative tribunal) with the phrase "I accuse the president of the Republic with. . ."[62] (Szulc, 1986, pp. 214-215).

On July 26, 1953, Castro led his famous attack on the Moncada military barracks at Santiago de Cuba. Even at this early stage in his career, Castro understood the value of cultivating favorable press coverage for his cause. Shortly before the failed attack, Castro made his way to Santiago to find his friend and Ortodoxo colleague Conte Aguero. By now, Conte Aguero was a well-known radio commentator on Radio Progreso. Castro wanted to inform Conte Aguero of the impending attack and ask him to coordinate propaganda broadcasts. Conte Aguero, however, was in Havana for the weekend.[63]

Castro was arrested and jailed for the Moncada assault. He was later pardoned by Batista and allowed to go into exile in Mexico in what Batista hoped would be regarded as a goodwill gesture. While in Mexico, Castro created his "July 26th Movement" rebel organization and planned the Cuban revolution. In 1956, Castro and his rebels landed the 62-foot-long yacht Granma in Oriente Province and built his rebel unit with volunteers from the countryside. Castro's strategy consisted of putting unrelenting pressure on the Batista government, forcing it to react harshly and thereby losing public support. Batista reacted just as Castro expected. The pressure from Castro's hit-and-run attacks was so intense, and so embarrassing, during 1957 that Batista dropped his efforts to compromise the press through bribery and issued a decree prohibiting criticism of all government authorities. This order effectively silenced the political broadcasters.[64] Ultimately, this action only earned Batista the enmity of the press.

In September 1957, Goar Mestre had gone into self-imposed exile to protest a Batista decree which Goar had claimed "converted broadcasters into mere puppets of the government."[65] During his exile, Goar journeyed throughout the United States and Latin America to garner support from media leaders to pressure the Batista government to withdraw the decree. While in Argentina, Goar saw a large, untapped market for television. The Peron government had so effectively hindered the development of private broadcasting that there was only one government-owned station serving the entire nation. After his exile from Cuba in 1960, Goar would rebuild his television empire in Argentina.[66]

In early 1958, after a delegation from the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters (IAAB) had met with Batista and persuaded him to withdraw the decree, Goar Mestre returned to Cuba. After Goar's return, he claims he was thoroughly disgusted by the government. Goar says he was so upset with Batista that he had clandestinely funneled about $150,000 to Castro through Castro supporters over the next two years against his brother Abel's advice.[67] Abel insists that CMQ did not send money to Castro.[68] It is one of several points in which the two brothers disagree. However, if Goar is correct and CMQ funneled money to Castro, even Abel agrees that CMQ would not have been alone among middle class businessmen in sending financial support to Castro. The fact that a businessman such as Goar Mestre could even consider sending money to an anti-government rebel unit in the hills illustrated how unpopular Batista had become in Cuba.

While Batista was applying censorship against the media, Castro was promising complete freedom of the press from his clandestine station Radio Rebelde in the Sierra Maestra mountains.[69] Castro was also carefully cultivating the goodwill of foreign journalists, such as Herbert Matthews of The New York Times, who shed his journalistic objectivity and lionized Castro.[70] Within Cuba, Castro earned the goodwill of Cuban political journalists, keeping a long series of correspondences from prison and later his Mexican exile with his old college friend and Ortodoxo companion Conte Aguero. Castro also allowed the popular Pardo Llada to tag along with his rebel troops in the Sierra Maestra during the last three months before the overthrow of Batista.[71]

WHEN THE REVOLUTION CAME

When Batista fled the country for exile in the Dominican Republic on December 31, 1958, with his most loyal supporters and several hundred million dollars from government coffers, he had lost the support of just about every segment of the public. Media owners were among those most happy to see Batista out of power. On January 28, Goar Mestre appeared on a panel discussion in Hollywood, California, addressing the impact of global television. Mestre said he was grateful for the end of "seven miserable years, during which we were harassed, persecuted and annoyed by the government."[72] He also reported that CMQ experienced difficulties during the revolution, like other broadcasters. But, he added, CMQ "came through (the revolution) very nicely, along with other Cuban broadcasters who took an impartial position."[73] During the panel discussion, Goar said that CMQ lost an estimated $100,000 (U.S.) in commercial revenue as a result of the rebel occupation of CMQ studios.[74] He added, however, that he was proud that CMQ contributed to public safety by "letting people stay at home and watch the revolution on TV instead of going out in the streets."[75]

During those first few days of street fighting between rebels and Batista loyalists in January 1959, many of Cuba's broadcast studios were taken over as propaganda outlets by the rebels. In most cases, station employees welcomed rebel units into the stations. CMQ's 10-story Radiocentro complex in the Vedado district of Havana, which was the center of fighting, was used as the rebel militia's headquarters. CMQ employees sympathetic with the rebels operated facilities while the rebels broadcast to the public. The rebels were prepared with a media propaganda offensive well in advance of the fighting through a clandestine organization known as the Civic Resistance Movement (CRM). The CRM was a loosely organized group of middle and upper class professionals established by the 26th of July Movement as a fifth column to attract the middle class and raise money for the rebel cause.[76]

The rebels carefully coordinated their broadcasts to calm concerned citizens from all classes. For the devoutly Catholic lower and middle classes, rebel soldiers appeared on the air rolling rosary beads through their fingers.[77]. For the upper classes and businessmen, the rebel spokesman who appeared on CMQ-TV was an assuring sight. He was Emilio Guede, a Havana advertising executive who for several years secretly served as the CRM's propaganda.[78]

As a result of the popularity of the revolution (and the unpopularity of Batista) it was not unusual for radio and television broadcasters to take credit for their role in supporting the revolution. Their claims, however, should be carefully scrutinized. As New York Times correspondent Charles Friedman wrote shortly after the rebel victory: "It is questionable how many of them (broadcasters) helped the rebel movement. As years pass, no doubt the number will grow phenomenally. Long after the revolution of 1933 (against President Machado), Cubans who were small children then were boasting of having manned the barricades against the dictator Machado."[79]

Castro himself made clear the importance of CMQ. On January 9, 1959, his second day in Havana after the rebel victory, Castro appeared on CMQ-TV's "Meet the Press" program. Although Castro faced a panel of questioners, he dominated the conversation and allowed time for few questions. He promised that political parties would be organized within eight to ten months and general elections would be held within eighteen months.[80]

Within the first month of the revolution, newspapers closely associated with the Batista government were expropriated. These included Tiempo, Manana, Replica, Pueblo, Ataja, and Alerta.[81] The new government permitted conservative newspapers such as Diario de la Marina to continue operating, despite their previously pro-Batista stands, so long as they had no direct connections with Batista. Radio stations associated with Batista were also confiscated, including Cirquito Nacional Cubano, operated by Batista's brother-in-law. In the provinces, the government took over Radio Mambi and Radio Ten-Ten.[82] In most cases, the owners of these media organizations associated with Batista fled the country before Castro marched into Havana.

A President Falls

By the summer of 1959, officials in Washington were concerned that Castro was leading Cuba on a pro-Soviet, pro-Communist path. In Cuba as well as the United States, the main discussion among political pundits was whether Cuba was "going Communist." The common belief was that Castro himself was not a Communist, but those around him were Communists.[83]

With the raging debate as to whether Castro was a Communist or not, events shedding light on Castro's commitment to Communism were closely watched. Publicly, Castro claimed that he was not a Communist. However, the Communists comprised part of the government coalition and Castro called upon anti-Communists to refrain from attacking Communism. On July 2, 1959, Castro gave a speech warning that it was "not entirely honorable" to attack the Communists.[84]

A short time later, on July 13, President Manuel Urrutia, a fierce anti-Communist hand-selected by Castro as the provisional president, was interviewed in the presidential palace on CMQ-TV. It was Urrutia's third and last television appearance with commentator Luis Conte Aguero. In these interviews, Urrutia attacked the Communists. On June 30, the Communist Party newspaper Hoy responded to Urrutia's attacks by accusing Urrutia of attempting to split the government. Hoy also attacked Conte Aguero, suggesting that Conte Aguero provoked Urrutia into making his attacks against the Communists.[85]

Conte Aguero, like many anti-Communists, hoped that the interview with Urrutia would strengthen Urrutia politically. Conte Aguero advised Urrutia before the interview that the most politic approach to take during the interview would be to praise Castro while attacking Communism.[86] According to Urrutia's own later account, he had contemplated resigning the presidency at least three times in the past as a result of his figurehead status and political ineffectiveness.[87] Many of his supporters, including Conte Aguero, urged him to continue as president and defend the anti-Communist cause within the government.

Urrutia followed Conte Aguero's advice, praising Castro, noting that "we are on the same road" as the anti-Communists.[88] In a prepared question, Conte Aguero asked Urrutia to respond to charges appearing in Hoy that claimed that Urrutia was disloyal to the revolution. Urrutia responded by attacking the Communists and their loyalty to the Revolution:

> If it be disloyalty to Russia, they are wrong, because never have I proffered loyalty to Russia. Now, if that be disloyalty to Cuba I think it would be difficult for them to prove it. . . . Read Hoy and you will notice that most of the paper is devoted exclusively to defending the interests of the Soviet Union. . . . Thus I say and declare, here and now, on my own responsibility, that the

> Communists in Cuba want to create a second front against the Cuban revolution. . . . I reject Communist support and I think that true Cuban revolutionaries ought to reject it openly because there is no reason for two fronts in Cuba.[89]

The Communists immediately responded against Urrutia's attack. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the editor of Hoy, charged that Urrutia's remarks violated Castro's pledge that to attack the Communists was "not entirely honorable." Castro responded to Urrutia's remarks by announcing his resignation as prime minister on July 17, claiming a rift between himself and Urrutia. The resignation was meant to force "the people" to choose between Urrutia or Castro.[90] Castro also announced that he would further explain his decision to resign during one of his late-night speeches that evening. In typical fashion, Castro was building anticipation for the forthcoming speech.[91]

Earlier that day, Raoul Castro, the head of the military, arrived at CMQ's Radiocentro complex with a contingent of soldiers and commandeered CMQ's facilities. The takeover was only temporary to ensure that Castro's speech denouncing Urrutia that night would receive nationwide attention without interruption. The government also wanted to ensure that CMQ did not give Urrutia an opportunity to respond to Castro's remarks over the air.[92]

That evening, in a three-hour speech that ran into the morning of the next day, Castro accused Urrutia of making statements "bordering on treason" and creating an anti-Communist hysteria that he claimed could lead to U.S. military intervention in Cuba.[93] As Castro spoke, crowds gathered outside the presidential palace demanding Urrutia's resignation with cries of "paredon" (the phrase "the wall" chanted by crowds that called for the execution of counter-revolutionaries). Urrutia telephoned CMQ studios asking that cameras be brought to the presidential palace so that he could reply to the speech, only to learn that Raoul Castro had taken over CMQ in anticipation of just such a request.[94]

The crowds outside the presidential palace were so large that Urrutia hurriedly assembled the Cabinet and resigned while Castro was still making his speech. Urrutia was placed under house arrest and eventually found refuge in the Venezuelan Embassy, where he stayed for two years before leaving the country. Castro was interrupted during his speech and handed a note informing him of the events that had transpired at the presidential palace. This gave Castro the pleasure to publicly announce Urrutia's resignation. Less than a week later, Castro resumed his position as prime minister after a throng of textile workers at a rally in a sports arena called a general strike demanding that he resume his previous position as prime minister.[95]

The U.S. Response

With increasingly tense relations between Washington and Havana, the United States considered using the commercial Cuban broadcast media to report its side of the conflict directly to the Cuban people.[96] This was a risky gambit that held the potential for a boomerang effect. If it was known that the United States was working Cuban broadcasters, Castro could claim that the Americans were meddling in Cuban affairs. As for the broadcasters, they faced the possibility of being labelled "traitors." All Cubans, even those who were anti-Communist and usually sympathetic toward the United States, saw their neighbor to the north as having dangerous imperialist tendencies.

Paul Bethel, the U.S. press attache in Cuba during this time, proposed a number of possible U.S. options with Cuban media leaders to present the U.S. view of Cuban-American affairs. His plans were constantly rejected by what he viewed as overly cautious U.S. officials.[97] Bethel established close relations with the Cuban broadcast media, which he thought could help the United States: "We found Sr. Abel Mestre more than ready to cooperate. This was important because both Abel and his brother Goar enjoyed considerable prestige in Cuba and the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters."[98]

One plan originated not from Bethel but from CMQ news director Nicolas Bravo. Bravo suggested that a "dignified appearance" by U.S. Ambassador Philip Bonsal, who spoke fluent Spanish, on CMQ-TV's "Meet the Press" might be successful in getting the U.S. position across to the Cuban public.[99] Bonsal was reluctant to appear on the program. He was even more reluctant after he learned that he would have to take questions from a panel of journalists. He feared that a hostile panelist might use his appearance on the program to raise the spectre of U.S. imperialism. Bonsal rejected the idea as "too risky."[100]

During July, after President Urrutia was forced to resign, Bethel suggested another plan to use the Cuban media to show the U.S. version of the Cuban-U.S. rift. Bethel received tacit approval from Abel Mestre and the management of a leading Havana station, Channel 2, to produce a series of television and radio programs designed "to show the Communists to be the traitors that they were, and to identify them with Batista."[101]

Bethel's attempt to link the Communists with Batista was by no means far fetched. Despite Batista's anti-Communist rhetoric during his last years in power, Batista had struck numerous political deals with the Communist Party in the past, and in fact won the Communist Party's backing during his successful 1940 presidential election bid.[102]

With the assistance of the U.S. Information Agency, Bethel received background information on leading Communist officials who worked with the Batista government during the 1940s. He also requested a budget from USIA to partially defray CMQ's and Channel 2's costs of producing the programs. The State Department eventually rejected the plan. Bonsal felt that the refusal of the U.S. government to support his plans was shortsighted and, if his plans were undertaken, "might have obviated the need for the Bay of Pigs invasion."[103]

Pressure on the Press

During the summer of 1959, Cuba's Minister of Communications, Dr. Enrique Oltuski, met with representatives of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in Washington, D.C.

The 23-year-old Oltuski, a graduate of the University of Miami, was considered a political moderate. He assured the commission's members that the Cuban government had no intentions of taking over private broadcast media.[104] The broadcast stations that had been expropriated were Batista organs, he explained. Oltuski pointed out to FCC officials that the island's "Mr. Cuba," Goar Mestre, was operating as normal. This, he said, was evidence of the government's "respect for the free enterprise system."[105]

During 1959, the Mestre brothers suspected that they might lose CMQ. Goar told a reporter for the trade publication Advertising Age that he "had already seen the handwriting on the wall--- not as early as I would have liked ---but by early 1959."[106] Goar says that he made up his mind to start investing in broadcasting organizations outside of Cuba in April 1959, on a day when Fidel Castro appeared on CMQ-TV with Conte Aguero for the fifth or sixth appearance. Castro, who was scheduled to appear on television for only a half hour but continued for four hours, spoke about government control over the economy.[107]

Goar Mestre had visited Argentina just weeks earlier and purchased several abandoned studios. He kept his business deals in Argentina secret from the government, fearing government retaliation for what would be regarded as his disloyalty if his dealings abroad were known. He would fly from Havana to Miami, and then from Miami to Buenos Aires. Even before leaving Cuba, Goar had been involved in deals to start broadcasting stations and production centers in South America.[108] In 1959, Goar had established television production companies in Argentina and Peru. His wife, Alicia, a native-born Argentine citizen, had acquired controlling interest of Rio de la Plata-TV, Channel 13, in Buenos Aires because Argentine law prohibited foreigners from owning television station. During the mid-1960s, a failed attempt to start a five-nation network in Venezuela ended in financial disaster and a $13 million loss.[109] By the early 1960s, Goar would build another media empire in Argentina and gain the title "the father of Latin American broadcasting."[110]

By 1960, private mass media throughout Cuba were feeling intense pressure. The pressures on the Cuban print media received worldwide attention. By December 1959 and January 1960, journalistic organizations asked their members to append statements of disapproval to stories that they believed were anti-revolutionary. These statements, known as coletillas (little tails), were added without the approval of management. The coletillas took several forms and typically read: "The contents do not conform to truth nor to the most elemental journalistic ethics."[111]

The decision to append coletillas to stories was ostensibly taken as an independent action by newspaper workers. It was clear, however, that the decision received government support.[112] Many newspaper journalists were among Castro's most vigorous supporters. Linotype employees also joined the cause. The National Federation of Printing Shop Employees instructed its members to append coletillas to stories that they disapproved. To the publishers, this attempt by workers to usurp editorial control was seen as tantamount to insubordination.[113]

During May 1960, internal fights between management and workers over coletillas led to the government takeover of two large dailies-- the conservative Diario de la Marina (May 11) and the liberal Prensa Libre (May 16). These takeovers were met with valiant but futile resistance from the press. Prensa Libre, the nation's largest circulation newspaper (over 100,000), came to the defense of Diario de la Marina, the nation's oldest newspaper, even though the two papers differed sharply in their editorial views.[114]

Prensa Libre's defense of Diario de la Marina almost assured the government takeover of Prensa Libre. Diario de la Marina was too far to the political right for most Cubans. During Cuba's War of Independence it sided with the Spanish and during the Second World War it sided with fascist movements.[115] Prior to the takeover of Diario de la Marina, the paper and its policies and its management came under a constant barrage of attacks from Pardo Llada on the radio and Hoy and Revolution.[116] Prensa Libre, aware that its end was near as a result of its defense of Diario de la Marina, ran a scathing editorial against the employees who usurped Diario de la Marina's editorial powers through coletillas, calling these workers "jackals of journalism."[117]

Although coletillas were not common in broadcast media -- and Goar Mestre says that CMQ never experienced a broadcast counterpart of coletillas[118] -- a U.S. Department of State report noted a case in March 1960.[119] Commentator Arturo Artalejo, of Radio Capital in Havana, suspended his regular commentaries after an announcer appeared over the air following Artalejo's commentary critical of the government and added that Artalejo's remarks "did not conform to the truth."[120]

In February 1960, the government seized Gaspar Pumarejo's Channel 12. Pumarejo had fled the country after Batista fell from power more than a year earlier. In May 1960, the government expropriated the nation's second largest television network, Telemundo. This expropriation, which came after a year of continuous government harassment, came as a shock to the media community. Telemundo rarely took strong political stands, even though its owner, Amadeo Barletta, a naturalized Cuban citizen who emigrated from Italy, was known to be sympathetic to Batista before the revolution. Barletta was one of Cuba's wealthiest men, with a media empire and other businesses reportedly worth $40 million.[121] The North American sociologist C. Wright Mills, writing in one of the earliest and most famous defenses of Castro, Listen Yankee, ascribed to the government's allegations against Barletta, claiming that Barletta was not only a friend of Mussolini during World War II, but also a drug smuggler.[122]

Government harassment against Telemundo was not direct. Instead, the government implemented a strategy of "group against group and class and class" where workers loyal to the government brought pressure on management to sabotage internal operations.[123] Not only journalists and Linotype workers, but even switchboard operators joined in this harassment by misdirecting calls and putting callers on hold until they grew impatient and hung up the telephone.[124]

The Political Commentators' Reactions

New York Times correspondent Charles Friedman (1959) wrote of Batista's crackdown on broadcast political commentary during the late 1950s: "The taboo on political programs imposed by Batista had the same effect as if he had taken away their (the Cuban public's) beloved beans and rice." Now, with Batista in exile and what was believed to be a democratic government in control, "Ace commentators warmed up vocal organs and practiced arm waving for a return of free speech."[125]

When Castro's revolution finally came to Cuba, Pardo Llada and Conte Aguero were unquestionably the leading broadcast commentators in Cuba. But to call them only broadcast commentators would be something of a misnomer, for they wore many hats. Both Pardo Llada and Conte Aguero had political ambitions. During late 1958 and early 1959, Pardo Llada was an announced candidate for president of Cuba after Batista called for elections without himself as a candidate. Batista called the elections to assure Washington that he would return the island to democracy. Pardo Llada withdrew his candidacy in February 1959 when it was clear to him that Batista planned to fix the elections, which were never held anyway.[126] Conte Aguero was a candidate for the House of Representatives before the election was called off by Batista's March 1952 coup.[127].

Conte Aguero and Pardo Llada took what appeared to be strong moral stands during these revolutionary times. They both vigorously supported the revolution and opposed its critics. The seemingly heated dispute that erupted between the two men was not over Communism, but anti-Communism. Conte Aguero led an anti-Communist campaign on the air, warning his "friend" Castro that Communists were trying to subvert the revolution. Pardo Llada sided with the government view that to be anti-Communist was merely a "smokescreen" for being against the revolution.

The dispute between Conte Aguero and Pardo Llada grew heated. Max Lesnik, an Ortodoxo party leader, said he tried to bring the two men together.[128] Years later in exile, Conte Aguero and Pardo Llada would meet again. During the summer of 1985, Pardo Llada, now a leading broadcaster and politician in Colombia, visited his daughter in Miami. He stopped to see Conte Aguero, now vice president of a large Chevrolet dealership in the Miami's Little Havana district. They were now friends united against Castro, as Conte Aguero describes the meeting.[129]

Pardo Llada, who had become Castro's press advisor, by his own description had became known among anti-Communists as the "Minister of Hate."[130] Although Pardo Llada's critics-- like Pardo Llada himself --originally supported Castro, most of Pardo Llada's anti-Communist critics accused Pardo Llada of becoming an apologist for Castro's worst excesses. Not until March 1961 did Pardo Llada leave Cuba for self-imposed exile in Mexico. From there he made his way to Spain and eventually settled in Colombia.[131]

A one-paragraph account of Pardo Llada's defection carried in Time illustrated the negative image that Pardo Llada had gained in the U.S. press and in anti-Communist circles:

> Hitler had his Goebbels and Castro his Jose Pardo Llada. If there was one sure thing about Pardo Llada, Castro's favorite and most poisonous radio commentator, it was that he was Cuba's number 1 opportunist. At the last possible moment, he switched from Batista's to Castro's side, and the venom he once, in Batista's pay, directed against Castro was now directed in Castro's pay against Batista. Last week he announced another switch in loyalties. He turned up at a Mexico City press conference, a defector from Castro, declaring that Communism had taken over Cuba and he could not stomach it.[132]

Lesnik says that the vilification of Pardo Llada was "an American point of view."[133] As for Time's assertion that Pardo Llada was ever on Batista's payroll, Lesnik, who knew Pardo Llada well since his early Ortodoxo years and left Cuba a year before Pardo Llada, said Pardo Llada was always an opponent of Batista. This association with Batista, he speculates, might have been a result of his participation as a presidential candidate in 1958-1959 when Batista called elections to curry favor with Washington. Pardo Llada withdrew his candidacy when he saw that Batista planned to rig the elections.

Pardo Llada explained his reasons for his defection in an article entitled "I was a Fidelista," published in the Cuban exile publication Bohemia Libre.[134] Pardo Llada wrote that while he voluntarily attacked anti-Communists, he was never in complete agreement with all government policies. He claimed that as early as February 1960, just before he launched a series of scathing denunciations against Conte Aguero and other anti-Communists, he got into an internal cold war (guerra fria) with the most ardent Communists in the government. He also claimed that he sent a 12-page report to Castro stating his opposition to expropriations of private media and warned Castro that the Cuban public was becoming weary of doctrinaire Marxist media.[135] At this time, Castro had not yet publicly announced that he was a Marxist. Castro would not make the announcement until December 1961.

The Conte Aguero Incident

Conte Aguero established a reputation as an author, radio commentator, newspaper columnist, poet, and Castro's semi-official biographer during the 1940s and 1950s. He often mentioned his personal friendship with Castro in his writings and radio broadcasts. The two men were schoolmates at the University of Havana. When Conte Aguero was offered an opportunity to host a daily program at CMQ-TV in January 1959, he was already a well-known commentator with a popular program on Radio Progreso. Conte Aguero gladly accepted Abel Mestre's offer to host the television program "Hablar con Conte Aguero" ("Speak With Conte Aguero") every day from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Meanwhile, he continued his noon to 12:30 program on Radio Progreso and afterwards drove by car to CMQ's Radiocentro complex for his television program.

The public debate between Conte Aguero and Pardo Llada grew intense after the French freighter la Coubre mysteriously exploded in Havana Harbor on March 4, 1960. Eighty-one men, including 27 Cuban dockworkers, died in the explosion. The 4,300-ton freighter exploded while workers were unloading Belgian-supplied weapons to the Cuban government. The next day, Castro himself led the funeral procession for the dockworkers. He delivered a stinging oration, claiming the explosion could not have possibly been an accident. He accused the United States with masterminding the bombing. Hoy and Pardo Llada repeated Castro's assertion that the explosion was the work of the United States, which was pressuring European nation not to supply Cuba with weapons. The anti-Communists joined the nationwide mourning for those killed in the explosion, but remained silent about U.S. participation in the explosion.[136]

After la Coubre explosion, the government organized a fund-raising drive to finance the purchase of weapons from foreign governments. As a figure with national name recognition, Conte Aguero lent his support to the gold drive. It was the patriotic thing to do, even though Conte Aguero today scoffs at the notion of U.S. involvement in the explosion.[137] Conte Aguero would stand outside CMQ's Radiocentro edifice beside a large crystal glass container and thank people as they dropped in their donations of money and jewelry. When people dropped religious objects such as crucifixes, Conte Aguero, a devout Catholic, would make religious remarks, such as "the cross is the symbol of eternity" or "God is our real monarch." According to Conte Aguero, these references to God upset the Communists, who intensified their attacks against him.[138]

It was at this time that Conte Aguero says he decided to launch what he calls his "noble campaign" to warn Castro that the revolutionary government was being undermined by Communists.[139] Pardo Llada never mentioned Conte Aguero in his Bohemia Libre article, in which he explained his reasons for his break with the Castro government. However, Pardo Llada asked readers to understand how he viewed the staunch anti-Communists such as Conte Aguero, who were also pro-American.[140] Under a heading in the article entitled "The errors of those who were not anti-Communists," Pardo Llada wrote that the anti-Communists were closely identified with the Americans and their history of imperialistic domination of the island. Meanwhile, he wrote, certain Communist ideals appealed to people such as himself. He claimed that between Communism and anti-Communism there was a third path exemplified by non-aligned political leaders such as Nehru, Sukharno, and Nassar.[141]

During March 1960, a rapid series of events led to the demise of CMQ as a Mestre-operated enterprise. The Mestre brothers direct control over CMQ ended in April 1960. Goar fled Cuba in late March and Abel fled in mid April. During the Mestres' absence, the station was operated by Manolo Corres, the head of programming. CMQ was officially taken over by the government on September 11.

Conte Aguero's use of CMQ-TV as a platform to attack Communism appeared to contribute to CMQ's demise. As Conte Aguero continued his broadcast campaign to warn Castro of

Communist infiltration of the government, he met with the Goar and Abel Mestre and told them that his campaign might result in a government takeover of CMQ.[142] He praised the Mestre brothers for their willingness to allow him to continue.[143] However, Abel Mestre says that the Conte Aguero incident was just one of a number of troubles that CMQ was having with the government at the time, albeit a major one.[144] CMQ was experiencing complaints dealing with other television and radio programs. Abcl believes that CMQ would have been expropriated whether Conte Aguero led his campaign or not, although the Conte Aguero episode may have accelerated events.(145) Tad Szulc, The New York Times correspondent in Cuba during the Conte Aguero episode, also believed that that the government was looking for an opportunity to take over CMQ, and the Conte Aguero episode provided the excuse.(146)

Conte Aguero launched the first large-scale salvo of his "noble campaign" on March 22 in a speech before the Havana Lions Club at the Hotel Havana Hilton. The speech was entitled "Karl Marx against Jose Marti." He claimed that the Cuban martyr Jose Marti (who died fighting the Spanish in Cuba's War of Independence in 1895) contrasted with Marx in every way and, if Marti were alive, would be opposed to Marx's ideas.

As Conte Aguero remembers the Lions Club speech, the audience broke into cheers. Tears streamed down their eyes. Even the hired help joined in the applause.[147] While there were cheers, there were also challenges. The New York Times reported jeering and charges of "Yankee lackey" on the floor.[148] If there was some jeering, Conte Aguero says, it was drowned by the applause.

The speech received wide attention as a challenge to Castro's stated policy that to be anti-Communist was to be anti-revolutionary. The speech was reported in a number of independent newspapers in some newspapers. It was also widely denounced. The government organ Revolucion reported Conte Aguero's speech, adding that the speech was an attempt "to murder the Cuban Revolution." Pardo Llada went on the air that day and called Conte Aguero's speech "divisionist."[149]

On March 24, Conte Aguero appeared on CMQ-TV and repeated his assertion that Communists were infiltrating the revolutionary government. He also announced that he would read an open letter to Castro on the air the next day. The basic thrust of Conte Aguero's promised open letter was well known, but his announcement that he would publicly read the letter over the air was seen as a challenge to the government. Pardo Llada appeared on the air that day and suggested that Conte Aguero was against the revolution. Pardo Llada said that while "not all anti-Communists are traitors, all the traitors are anti-Communists . . . I would rather be a sincere Communist than a lackey of the Yankees."[150]

As promised, on March 25 Conte Aguero read an open letter over his Radio Progreso program, warning Castro of Communist infiltration of the government. After reading the letter, he announced that he would read it again that day on his CMQ television program. After the Radio Progreso program, Pardo Llada appeared on the air and said that Conte Aguero should either be expelled from the country within 24 hours or shot.[151]

When Conte Aguero arrived at CMQ on March 25, he was met by crowds of student demonstrators. Although Conte Aguero says that he was warned that demonstrators would be waiting for him outside CMQ's studios, he was taken aback by the size of the crowds. He claims that he wanted to get out of the car, make his way through the crowd and into the studio to deliver his open letter. But the crowd was so threatening that, after briefly slowing down, the driver hit the accelerator and sped away.[152]

The Mestre brothers and other CMQ employees had watched the incident out in the street from the fifth floor window of the Radiocentro building. The Mestre brothers immediately met with their news director Nicolas Bravo and had him write a strong editorial denouncing what they viewed as the organized provocation against Conte Aguero for the evening newscast.[153] Goar, who for years had cultivated the image of "Mr. Cuba" and was closely associated with CMQ now felt endangered as CMQ became a target of violent attacks.[154] Goar left the building through a production studio to avoid the crowds and made his way home by car. At home, he emptied his safe of money and jewels and prepared to flee the country with his family.[155] On March 27, Goar and most of his family had hastily fled the country.

That evening, militiamen impounded the financial records of CMBF-TV, the Mestre brothers' second network. The government claimed to have found evidence that CMBF was partly financed by funds illegally obtained under President Batista. Goar recalls that he learned of the takeover when the manager of CMBF called him up. The manager asked Goar what he should do. Goar, who says he had been expecting such an action, told him to go out and get drunk.[156]

Meanwhile, Conte Aguero had found temporary asylum in a house with friends. While in asylum in the house, Conte Aguero watched government officials on television attack him. On March 28, Fidel Castro delivered a 4-hour speech. More than two hours of Castro's speech was devoted to a denunciation of Conte Aguero.[157] That same day, Conte Aguero made his way to the Argentine embassy and found asylum. Also that day, Goar and Abel Mestres' bank accounts were frozen along with that of some 400 other prominent Cubans.[158]

Abel Mestre's family left Cuba while Abel stayed behind to watch over CMQ's affairs. Abel, who had shunned the public limelight, says that unlike his brother he was able to move about freely in Cuba, although he was able to accomplish very little with his assets frozen.[159] He visited various government ministries and asked to speak with whoever would meet with him to unfreeze his accounts. He eventually left Cuba in frustration for the United States on April 11 expecting that he might return, but he never did.[160]

On March 31, Abel entered CMQ-TV studios and, just before the start of the "Meet the Press" program, told station workers that he himself would appear on the program alone that day. On the air, Abel read from a prepared speech and announced his and Goar's retirement from television "until the situation is clarified."[161] When Abel referred to Castro's March 28 speech, he pointed out that in Castro's denunciation of Conte Aguero, Castro "was kind enough to not involve us (CMQ) with the political views of that commentator (Conte Aguero), who was the main topic of that speech."[162] Abel added:

> We want to say that it has always been our policy not to assume responsibility-- outside of what the law requires -- for the opinions mentioned by our guests and commentators. Besides being professional journalists, these commentators are citizens who have their own standards for looking at public issues. It would not be difficult for me to show that among the commentators at CMQ, they have displayed radically different views. . . . Here, all criticisms are heard, and we have always stated that our purpose is to air public opinion through live discussion as our program "Meet the Press" illustrates. Not even when the unforgettable Ortodoxo leader Eduardo Chibas had a show on our airwaves was it possible to label CMQ with his political views.[163]

When CMQ was officially expropriated in September 1960, the government never officially accused the Mestre brothers with Batista collusion. According to a State Department report, CMQ was the first station that the Cuban government had expropriated without justifying the expropriation on the grounds of past collusion with the Batista government.[164] The government claimed that the Mestre brothers had abandoned their broadcast properties and allowed CMQ to fall into disrepair.[165] The CMQ broadcast empire was consolidated as part of the official government broadcasting system, the Independent Front of Free Stations (known by the Spanish acronym FIEL). By now, Pardo Llada had become the chief of FIEL and Castro's press relations advisor.[166]

On April 6, Conte Aguero left Cuba for asylum in the United States. He was escorted to Jose Marti International Airport by the Argentine ambassador and a member of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations. Up to this time, Conte Aguero claimed that the government was infiltrated by Communists, but he had never accused Castro himself of being a Communist. Now, before going into exile, Conte Aguero was more forthright in his accusations. He still did not accuse Castro of being a Communist, but he accused the government of supporting Communists. Communism, he said, "has official authorization for all its villainy, even to putting in danger the lives of those who oppose it."[167]

Conclusions

This paper investigated political commentary in Cuban broadcasting before and during the Cuban revolution, up to the government expropriation of the last privately owned broadcast network, CMQ.

There is no question that the political commentators used the broadcast media to attack their opponents and further their political careers. The word "irresponsible," which is frequently used to describe these commentators, involves some subjectivity. They certainly were irresponsible if, by this, the critics mean that the commentators often had little or no evidence to support their allegations. Whatever the truth of these charges of irresponsibility, such irresponsibility may be grounds for a libel suit but not government expropriation of media.

The government's expropriations served to communicate to the Cuban public the political direction of the revolutionary government and what was the "correct" political view to express during these changing times. A leading German public opinion theorist has put forward a "spiral of silence" theory that may shed light on Cuban public opinion at this time.[168] Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann argued that most people carefully measure the "climate of opinion" to determine what are the "correct" opinions to publicly express. If members of the public believe their opinions are dominant, they will publicly express their opinions when given the opportunity to do so and thereby contribute to the climate of opinion. If they believe their opinions are on the wane, they will remain silent. Noelle-Neumann further argued that during periods of political change and uncertainty, such as Cuba at this time, people are particularly likely to pay close attention to the climate of opinion to learn what are the appropriate and inappropriate opinions to express.

In the clashes between Communists and anti-Communists during the Conte Aguero episode, the Castro government, which remained coy about its loyalty to each side, favored the Communists. For people unsure about which side to support, loyal revolutionaries (and that was just about everyone in Cuba) clearly could see which side the government favored. As Ruby Hart Phillips (1962), a former New York Times corespondent in Havana, wrote of the Conte Aguero episode:

> The Conte Aguero incident crystallized the anti-Communist sentiment in the island. The ardent supporters of Castro came out in favor of the Communists, and many people who had not yet decided about the depth of the Communist penetration in the government now realized the truth (pp. 183-184).

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CULTIVATION ANALYSIS: THE CASE OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD OF KOREAN TELEVISION DRAMA

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CULTIVATION ANALYSIS: THE CASE OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD OF KOREAN TELEVISION DRAMA

Abstract

This study attempts to describe some possible elaborations of the cultivation hypothesis and present relevant evidence from a Korean student sample. Using the postulates and methodology of the cultivation analysis approach to mass communication, this study employs a two-pronged research strategy: message system analysis and cultivation analysis. Within the clear limitations of our sample and our measures, our findings do suggest that heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to give television answers, which are reflected in some of the patterns of facts and actions presented in the world of Korean television drama.

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Abstract

This study attempts to describe some possible elaborations of the cultivation hypothesis and present relevant evidence from a Korean student sample.
Using the postulates and methodology of the cultivation analysis approach to mass communication, this study employs a two-pronged research strategy: message system analysis and cultivation analysis.

Message system analysis began by selecting a week-long sample of Korean prime-time (7 - 10 p.m.) network dramatic programming broadcast nationally during a one week period of March 1987. To test the cultivation hypothesis that patterns of television violence relate to conceptions of social reality held by Korean students, seven questions which were designed to measure respondents' perceptions of violence were derived from the format that Gerbner and his associates used for the questions about violence in Society. These items probed the extent of the respondents' television bias in their beliefs about violence in Korean society.

Within the clear limitations of our sample and our measures, our findings do suggest that television viewing goes with most of them, but statistically they are not strongly related. Heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to give television answers, which are reflected in some of the patterns of facts and actions presented in the world of Korean television drama.

CULTIVATION ANALYSIS: THE CASE OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD OF KOREAN TELEVISION DRAMA

Since television sets have become common household items, many studies have centered on aspects of social reality related to the content of television. Children and teenagers particularly seem to be the subjects of increasing concentration in studies involving television's influence since television has emerged as the truly dominant mass medium. As George Gerbner (1986) and his colleagues put it,

> Our children are born into a home in which--for the first time in human 212 history--not the parents, church, or school but a centralized commercial institution tells most of the stories most of the time. We are all exposed to its vivid and recurrent patterns of images, information, and values every day.

If this is true, television may "cultivate from infancy the very predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other primary sources" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli, 1986, p. 18). Television has become a substitute for the mother; a real baby sitter for many young children and a companion for adolescents in many countries (Wu, 1989).

Television offers fun, excitement, imagination, and so on, and it has become a fascinating medium for children and teenagers. They tend to view adult programs, and they watch as late in the night as adults. In the U.S., the average amount of time spent viewing by half of all American adolescents on a given day is three hours or more (Lowery and DeFleur, 1983). Despite their emergence from the more limited world of childhood and their increased reliance on peers, adolescents continue to spend a great deal of their time watching television (Morgan and Rothschild, 1983 and Jeffres, 1986). In some Asian countries, they watch more television than adults (The Korea Times, 1987). Obviously, the teenagers of many countries spend many hours in front of the television set.

It has been agreed that television has become the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli, 1986). Television's symbolic impacts in shaping or directing viewer's perceptions and behaviors toward others and society have been widely researched and documented in the United States as well as other European countries.

Cultivation analysis tries to assess television's contribution to viewers' beliefs, behaviors, and values based on the delineation of the central and critical facts of life in the world of television (Gross and Morgan, 1985). Over the past 20 years, a large number of studies have found that those who spend more time watching television are more likely than light viewers to express views, beliefs, and assumptions that are congruent with television's portrayals of life and society (Morgan and Rothschild, 1983). Adolescents, who have fewer sources of information and real-world experiences than do adults, are often particularly susceptible to these messages (Morgan and Rothschild, 1983). For example, heavy adolescent viewers express exaggerated apprehensions about their chances of encountering violence (Gerbner et al., 1978 and 1979; Gerbner et al., 1980). Television viewing also contributes to adolescents' images about aging and age roles (Gerbner et al., 1980), to their notions about occupations (Morgan and Gerbner, 1982), to their health-related beliefs and practices (Gerbner et al., 1981), to their political orientations (Gerbner et al., 1982), and to many other topical issues.

Since the 1960s, researchers have investigated whether there is a correlation between the amount of time spent watching violent television programs and aggressive behavior. The results from a variety of surveys conducted primarily among adolescents have been remarkably consistent: "Viewing violent television programs was significantly associated with aggressive behavioral tendencies" (Jeffres, 1986, p. 222).

Gerbner et al.'s studies (1969, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1980, and 1984) indicate that there are overwhelming amounts of violence on television. Gerbner et al.'s studies of television violence from 1967 to 1979 indicate that about 80 percent of all programs contain violence. Although the proportion of violence fluctuates depending on the year, the pattern is remarkably consistent over the 12-year period. On the average, there are five violent acts per program.

Robinson and Bachman (1972) found that violence viewing was significantly correlated with a number of measures of aggression. Similar findings were reported by Dominick and Greenberg (1972), Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp and Rubens (1982), Gross and Morgan (1985), among others.

Although some replications of cultivation analysis confirm Gerbner et al's findings, there is considerable disagreement about cultivation analysis in other countries. Pingree and Hawkins (1977) studied over 1,200 public school students from Perth, Australia, and their findings can be seen as consistent with Gerbner et al.'s study. For Australian children, amount of exposure to U.S. television programs was found to be correlated with television-biased conceptions of reality about Australia. Also they report conforming results for the prevalence of violence variables, despite controls individually and together for age, sex, perceptions of reality, media studies, newspaper reading, current events knowledge, SES, and Australian-American similarity. Thus, their findings suggest that the cultivation result is replicable in a non-American, although somewhat similar culture.

Doob and MacDonald (1979)'s study seems to support the cultivation hypothesis. To test the cultivation hypothesis, Doob and MacDonald selected city and suburban neighborhoods in Toronto, Canada, that were either high- or low-crime areas based on actual police figures. Respondents in these neighborhoods were interviewed door to door and were asked to estimate the likelihood of their being victims of violence as well as about their media use (television viewing). Media use was broken down into measures of total television viewing (number of program watched), television violence viewing (number of violent television programs watched), viewing of television news, listening to radio news, and newspaper reading. Their findings indicate that people who live in high-crime areas are more afraid than people in low-crime areas. Also, people in high-crime areas watched more television and tended to watch more violent television.

Hedinsson et al. (1984) studied media use as well as its causes and effects among 2,000 children and adolescents within two panels, a pre-school panel in Malmo and a primary school panel in Vaxjo in 1976, 1978, and 1980. They found, for Swedish children and adolescents, amount of exposure to television is correlated with television-biased conceptions of reality: heavy television viewers are more likely than light viewers to overestimate the U.S. population; and to suggest higher penalties for persons who commit crime. They also found that heavy television viewing reinforces for the high social class occupations which are so heavily overrepresented on the television screen. Although they found some weak associations, they demonstrated the importance of using the most powerful multivariate statistical techniques possible when trying to explain complex social phenomena such as adolescent television use and the consequences thereof.

Other researchers have reached opposite conclusions, however. Bouwman (1984) reports a lack of cultivation effects in the Netherlands. Bouwman, by means of telephone interview (n=607), replicated Gerbner et al.'s study. Spurious relations were found between television viewing and cultivation items, when he controlled for key demographic variables such as education, age, gender, and degree of urbanization. His study confirmed that cultivation of fear by television drama does not seem to be a real phenomenon in the Netherlands. His findings do suggest Gerbner et al.'s cultivation hypothesis is not confirmed by the Dutch research results.

In 1978 Wober (1979) published a research report from which it was evident that replication of Gerbner's approach did not lead to the same outcomes in England as in the U.S. Wober claimed:

> If the effects of heavy violence consumption are as strong as alleged, they should be discernible when sought again in a similar culture, and with similar methods. An attempt to replicate the American results among British viewers suggests that the paranoid effect is absent from their viewing experience.

On account of this, Wober doubted about the correctness of Gerbner's assertions. Gerbner et al. reproached Wober for the lack of an appropriate content study and his misconceptions on the cultivation hypothesis; moreover, Wober himself had concluded, too, that the English material was much less violent than the American material, which made further replication quite precarious.

Although Wober's findings failed to confirm the cultivation process, his study brought up important issues in the study of cross-cultural comparisons: the difference in television programs and the assessment of violence in the two societies. For example, Wober's replication involved programming in Britain, where, according to Wober, only 10 percent of shows are violent, compared to 80 percent of shows which contain some violence in

American programming. Thus, the findings suggest significant differences between two countries.

Despite some of the contradictory findings, most researchers acknowledge that there is "probably something to Gerbner's idea that television viewing cultivates distorted perceptions of reality" (Jeffres, 1986, p. 212). The study of cultivation analysis has broadened in scope and changed in conception. For example, cultivation researchers have studied beliefs about sexroles, race, age, family values and structures, attitudes about doctors, perceptions of affluence and population illness, and political beliefs. However, cultivation analysis in cross-cultural studies still shows a number of problems in replicating cultivation results in other countries mainly due to differences in culture, value orientations, media systems, media habits, etc. Aware of these problems, this study attempts to examine whether the cultivation result is replicable in a non-American culture.

Although the number of studies on cultural indicators applied to various areas has been increased in recent years, little empirical research has been done to examine the cross-cultural effects between television viewing and perception of violence. Hawkins and Pingree (1984) pointed out that the validity of cross-cultural comparisons on any given cultural indicator rests on four dimensions of similarity between the cultures and media systems, because each of these affects the meaning any given content has to its audience, the ways in which that content is used and interpreted, and the degrees to which that content can be taken to represent the values of that culture. He suggested four dimensions:

(1) The control of the mass communication industry in question (e.g., commercial, governmental, non-profit foundation, etc.).

(2) Audience selectivity of content in that medium.

(3) National variations in media mix.

(4) The institutional integration of various mass-media industries.

Taken together, this study assumes that the role of television in influencing social reality may vary from culture to culture, and this might cause important findings for further study.

The purpose of this study is to see whether it is possible to trace any cultivation effects in a Korean student sample. It also attempts to elaborate on the cultivation hypothesis and present relevant evidence from a Korean student sample.

Television in Korea

Since the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) put its first television program on the air in December 1961, KBS has doubled programming hours from 42 hours a week in 1961 to 88.5 hours a week in 1988. After the restructuring and reorganization of broadcasting, as of early 1981, KBS has struggled to create a distinctive personality for each of its three channels: KBS-TV1 as a general network, KBS-TV2 as an entertainment channel, and KBS-TV3 (UHF) as educational television.[1]

Following KBS-TV, Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC) aired its first program in August 1969. Since then, MBC has increased programming from 46 hours a week in 1961 to 85.5 hours a week in 1988. Currently, three stations run for 4 hours of daytime broadcasting beginning at 6:00 a.m. and for 6.5 hours of evening broadcast beginning at 6:00 p.m., but they operate an additional 4.5 hours (1:00 - 5:30 p.m.) on Saturday and 7.5 hours more (10:00 - 5:30 p.m.) on Sunday. According to the Korean TV Guide for the first week of March, 1987, three networks (KBS-TV1, KBS-TV2 and MBC-TV) each presented 88.5 hours of programming.

Television in Korea has become the favored medium and television watching the favorite national pastime for the mass audience (Lee, 1982). There were only 38,000 television sets used in Korea in 1970, but this figure climbed to an estimated 6.27 million by 1980 (Lee, 1982). As of 1987, Koreans owned close to 8 million television sets, a penetration rate of 97.5 percent.

The Republic of Korea has 78 television stations. Of these, 51 are connected to the government-run Korean Broadcasting System networks (KBS-TV1, KBS-TV2), and 21 are affiliates of the Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC-TV), which is partially owned by the government. The remaining six stations are part of the American Force Television Network (AFKN-TV), which is run by the U.S. military.

Table 1 About Here

For the program analysis of the three networks, Table 1 shows that three Korean television networks each broadcast 88.5 hours per week, more than half of which consists of entertainment programs. KBS-TV2 presents the most entertainment programs. By contrast, the news/public affairs broadcasting among the three networks is quite uneven: KBS-TV1 (33.5 percent) presents the most news programs, followed by MBC-TV (23.5 percent) and KBS-TV2 (8.3 percent).

In the early period, Korean TV networks were heavily dependent on foreign imports in their programming. Most of them came from the U.S. Overall, imported programs averaged approximately one-third of total programing hours in 1969. In recent years, the Korean TV networks have decreased imported programming hours from 16 percent in 1983 to 10 percent in 1987. In the 85.5 hours weekly program schedule as of March 1987, MBC-TV presented 15.1 hours of American programs, compared to 11 hours of KBS-TV2 and 4.1 hours of KBS-TV1. These were programs such as "A Team," "Airwolf," "MacGyver," "Knight Rider," "Weekend American Movies" and cartoons.

METHOD

Using the postulates and methodology of the cultivation analysis approach to mass communication, this study employs a two-pronged research strategy: message system analysis and cultivation analysis.[2] Message system analysis began by selecting a week-long sample of Korean prime-time (7 - 10 p.m.) network dramatic programming broadcast nationally during a one week period of March 1987. The sample of three Korean networks' programming was videotaped and coded by two trained observers who made detailed, objective records about different aspects of program content.[3] Weekend-daytime programs were excluded in this study because most of them were rebroadcasting or sports programs.

Message system analysis focuses on violence in the prime-time dramatic programs. According to Gerbner et al. (1978, p. 179), violence is "the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon, against self or other) compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing." Based on this definition, clear-cut violence in the sample was coded independently by the two coders. For example, no idle threats, verbal abuse, or gestures without credible violent consequences were included.

For the analysis of violence in the program samples, this study examines the frequency and rate of violent episodes, and the number of roles in which characters were the perpetrators of violence (violents), its victims, or both. According to Gerbner et al. (1978, p. 181), these data are called "prevalence," "rate," "role," "involvement," and "risk ratio," respectively:

> **Prevalence** is the percent of programs containing any violence in a particular program sample. Prevalence is calculated both as percent of programs (%P) and as percent of program hours containing violence.
>
> **Rate** expresses the frequency of these acts in units of programming and in units of time.
>
> **Role** is defined as the portrayal of characters as violents (committing violence) or victims (subjected to violence), or both and yields several measures. They are: percent of violents out of all characters in a sample; percent of victims out of all

> characters in a sample; all those involved as violents or as victims or both (%V); percent of killers (those committing fatal violence); percent of killed (victims of lethal violence); and all those involved in killing, either as killers or as killed (%K).
>
> **Involvement** occurs in a scene of overt physical force, and an "involved" character may commit or suffer violence, or both. For example, a victimized character is clearly hurt, killed, or compelled to act under a credible threat of pain or death. A violent perpetrates these actions, and both characters' choices are written into the script as part of characterization and plot element.
>
> **Risk ratio** signifies a character's chances for positive or negative outcome once involved in violence. It indicates the burden of risk with which each dramatic and social type enters the arena. The violence-victim ratio denotes chances for being a violent or a victim. The killer-killed ratio marks the risk of killing or being killed. Involvement in violence and in killing may range from 0 to 100 percent of a particular group. Risk ratios are obtained by dividing the more numerous of these two roles by the less numerous with each group. A plus sign indicates more violents and killers, a minus sign more victims and killed. A ratio of 1.00 means that they are even, a ratio of 0.00 means that there are none. When there are only violents or only killers shown, the ratio will read +0.00. Conversely, when there are only victims or only killed, the ratio will read -0.00.

For cultivation analysis, a questionnaire was administered to 1,169 Korean students (588 eighth graders and 581 eleventh graders) attending four junior and senior high schools in two different suburb areas of Seoul, Korea. A total of 1,169 questionnaires, written in Korean, were given in October 1987 to Korean students. The survey was conducted in classes over a two-week period. Instructors (teachers) were provided full instructions by the author to answer any possible questions raised by the respondents.

The questionnaire was lengthy and contained items assessing a variety of opinions, knowledge, and media beliefs and habits. To test the cultivation hypothesis that patterns of television violence relate to conceptions of social reality held by Korean students, seven questions which were designed to measure respondents' perceptions of violence were derived from the format that Gerbner and his associates used for the questions about violence in Society. These items probed the extent of the respondents' television bias in their beliefs about violence in Korean society. The questions and their responses (with the TV-biased response marked) were:

- Think about the number of people involved in some kind of violence in any given week. Do you think the number of people involved in violence is closer to 1 in 20, or is it closer to 1 in 50?

  _TV__ 1 in 20 _____ 1 in 50

- What percent of all crimes are violent crime like murders, rapes, robbery and aggravated assault?

  _TV__ 1 in 10 _____ 1 in 100

- What percent of men have jobs in law enforcement and crime detection --like policemen, detectives, etc.? Is it closer to 1 in 100, or is it closer 1 in 1000?

  _TV___ 1 in 100 _____ 5 in 1000

- How often is it alright to his someone if you are mad at them for a good reason -- is it almost always alright or almost never alright?

  __TV__ Almost always alright
  ______ Almost never alright

- Is it dangerous to walk alone in the big city at night?

TV It is dangerous.
_____ It is safe.

- Is it dangerous to walk alone in your neighborhood at night?

TV It is dangerous.
_____ It is safe.

- Does most fatal crime take place between strangers, or between people who know each other well?

_____ Between people who know each other well
TV Between strangers

Each question has an inferred or objectively determined "television response" reflecting the "television view" of the facts, and a "non-television answer." For example, one cultivation question asks: "Do you think the number of people involved in violence is closer to 1 in 20, or is it closer to 1 in 50?" The first answer "1 in 20" more closely reflects the world of television and is used as the "television answer," while the "1 in 50" answer more closely matches data from the Korean Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office and reflects the real life circumstances of most Koreans. Exposure to Korean television programs was measured with the open-ended question, "On an average day, how many hours do you spend watching television?"

FINDINGS

Message System Analysis. Violence in the world of Korean television is not nearly as rampant as that of U.S. television. Eighteen out of 37 prime-time programs sampled contained some violence (%P=48.6). As shown in Table 2, less than one out of ten

(9.28%) of all 722 characters was involved in some type of violence. Among them, only four characters were killed (ratio of killers to killed is +1.0).

Table 2 About Here

Table 2 indicates that violents slightly outnumber victims by a ratio of +1.03. Overall, men are more likely than women to become involved in some violence. Nearly one out of every seven men, as compared to one out of every 25 women, is involved in some violence. However, overall men's risks are -1.08, while women's are +1.60. Women are less likely to be involved in some violence than men but show a high positive violent-victim ratio when involved. Furthermore, in the world of Korean dramatic television, children and adolescents of both sexes are seldom involved in violence. But as they age, their chances of involvement in violence increase. But no violence is found in the female elderly group.

Male elderly group to be involved in violence. Although they are never involved in killing, they have the highest ratio of violents to victims of the four male age-related groups. Young male adults and the elderly are most likely to be violents and victims. Although there are extremely few killings in the Korean television world, women killers outnumber men killers by .92 to .25. However, in general, women are significantly less likely than men to be hurt or killed. Among the killed, all are males. Table 4 presents risks by marital status. Both unmarried men and unmarried women are more likely to become involved in violence than are married males and females.

Table 3 About Here

Table 3 presents risks by class. It is somewhat dangerous to be a member of lower-class characters in the world of Korean dramatic programming. As shown in Table 3, low-class female characters get involved in violence in all cases. For males, as a character's social and economic class increases, the odds of involvement in some violence decrease. Again, the same pattern is found in females: as their class increases, the odds of involvement in some violence decrease.

Table 4 About Here

In the world of Korean prime-time television, 'bad' characters are the most involved in violence (see Table 4). They are the most likely to kill others and be killed, having the highest killing ratio of all characters. By contrast, 'good' characters of both sexes are significantly less likely to become involved in violence than 'bad' characters. Interestingly, 'good' characters of both sexes are more likely than 'bad' characters to be violents, but they are never involved in any killing. However, in the world of U.S. television, good characters are victims of the most violence relative to their ability to inflict it upon others. "Good" males are the most likely to commit violence as well, having the highest killer-killed ratio of all characters.

In general, the characters most involved in violence are men classified as elderly, unmarried, lower-class, and bad, and women categorized as settled adults, unmarried, lower-class, and bad. It seems that unmarried, lower-class, and bad characters of both sexes are mostly likely to be violents and victims. However, children, married, upper-class, and 'good' characters of both sexes are the "safest" people in the world of Korean television programs.

Significant differences between Korea and the U.S should be noted here. In world of U.S. television, young boys and girls are more likely to be victims rather than victimizers in violent conflicts. But as they age, their chances diverge. This pattern is not found in the Korean sample. There are significant differences between two countries in "Risks by Class." In the U.S., as the character's class goes down, the chances of both sexes being involved in violence steadily goes up. But that pattern does not hold up among the Korean sample.

Some similarities, however, are found between two countries' television world. In both countries, 'Bad' characters are most involved in violence and killing, and the characters of both sexes most involved in violence are classified as bad, lower-income, and unmarried.

Cultivation Analysis. The sample is 50.2 percent male and 49.8 percent female, and 50.3 percent eighth graders and 49.7 percent eleventh graders; 58.7 percent of the students' fathers, and 30.5 percent of their mothers attended at least some college. Respondents were aged from 13 to 18 (the mean age is 15.8 years, SD=1.58). The sample was primarily upper-middle class, but shows a good deal of socioeconomic diversity.[4] In terms of religion, 34 percent were "Christians," 11 percent "Catholics," 10 percent "Buddhists," and 45 percent indicated they did not affiliate themselves with any specific religion.

Table 5 About Here

By American standards, exposure to Korean television is relatively low; 30 percent reported spending over two hours viewing television "on an average day." Respondents were trichotomized into light (less than one hour; 30%), medium (one hour to two hours; 40%), and heavy viewers (over two hours; 30%).

Of the various demographic variables considered, television viewing appears to be most closely related to grade (gamma= -.57, p<.001), age (gamma= .-43, p<.001), father's education (gamma= -.35, p<.001), mother's education (gamma= -.31, p<.001), income (gamma= -.30, p<.001), and family size (gamma= -.16, p<.001).

Table 6 About Here

Table 6 presents the relationship between television viewing and the "violence" variables. As found in the message system analysis, nearly one out of ten (9.2 %) of all 722 characters was involved in violence in the world of Korean television programs. Although this is relatively low, compared to the U.S. data, the violence in the world of Korean television programs is 14 times as high as in the real world (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 About Here

Overall, as Table 6 indicates, heavy viewers of television, more often than light viewers, give television-biased responses. Controlling for the key demographic variables, there is a positive relationship between television viewing and attitudes about violence in most cases. Male students who watch more are significantly more likely than female students to give television answers. By contrast, eighth graders show weak associations with television viewing. The positive relationship is particularly strong among male and 11th graders (see Table 7).

Table 7 About Here

Overall, the simple r shows that students who watch more television are more likely to give television-biased answers than are students who watch less (data not shown). Simultaneous controls reduce its strength mainly due to grade, but the relationship remains positive in most case. The relationship is positive and significant for male students. No associations are found among eighth graders. Considering that crime/detective shows are not favored programs among older students, this finding provides considerable support for the evidence that selective program exposure may be significantly associated with respondents' perceptions of "violence".

DISCUSSION

In sum, within the clear limitations of our sample and our measures, our findings do suggest that television viewing goes with most of them, but statistically they are not strongly related; controlling for grade eliminates most associations. Heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to give television answers, which are reflected in some of the patterns of facts and actions presented in the world of Korean television drama. For example, in the world of Korean dramatic television, the percentage of programs containing any violence in the sample is 48.6 (18 out of 37); the prime-time rate of episodes of violence is one per hour, and less than one out of seven (12.9%) of all major 318 characters, or one out of 11 of all 722 characters (9.3%), was involved in some type of violence. By American standards, this is low. However, it may mean a lot to Koreans, considering that all violent programs are aired during the prime-time slot and these programs are the most popular programs in Korea. Although violence in the world of Korean television is not nearly as rampant as in U.S. television, the crime rate in the world of dramatic prime-time television is 14 times as high as in the real world (see Figure 1). Thus, it is possible that television violence might cultivate perceptions and actions in the direction of the patterns demonstrated in the world of Korean television drama.

Although this study suggests that, overall, students who watch more television tend to give more television-biased responses about violence, several limitations should be noted here. First, when comparing Korean data with data from the U.S. and European countries, we have to consider the differences between these countries and their media systems. Korea, as a television country, is not strictly comparable with the U.S. or European countries. For example, Korean television networks are forced by the government to air what they perceive as quality programs, imbued with Korea's cultural identity and national aspirations. Thus, some audience members who like to watch more entertainment programs might avoid those traditional or cultural programs. They are more likely to watch entertainment programs than non-entertainment programs. That is one of the reasons prime-time soap operas are extremely popular among Korean viewers.

Second, Korean television appears more restrictive than American television in depicting dating, marriage, violence, sex, etc. No kissing, love affairs, partial nudity, or brutally violent scenes are allowed to be broadcast on Korean television networks. For example, the Korean networks are encouraged to air what they perceive as "quality" programs. This means that there is no brutal violence, partial nudity, or love affairs allowed, and that even kissing scenes are prohibited. Thus, the content of television is expected to reflect Korean moral and ethical standards. For example, topics dealing with violence against elderly people and children are seldom broadcast on Korean networks. Furthermore, any unethical and religious themes which are against Korean moral standards are not allowed. Thus, there are no Korean versions of "Miami Vice," "Dallas," and "Three's Company" on the three Korean television networks.

Third, the opportunity for viewing television among Koreans is more limited. Both the number of Korean channels (only three national channels and limited cable television) and the time that television programs are broadcast (limited day-time broadcasting in Korea, four hours per day from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.) are much smaller than those of U.S. and European countries.

Fourth, the sample is drawn from the suburb of a large city region. Most respondents, therefore, live in the suburbs. Perhaps, a study of those who live in rural areas might reveal somewhat different findings. The present analysis raises some questions: It did not, for instance, consider the various geographic differences. Regional differences should be considered and tested in future analysis.

Lastly, the findings, of course, are based on a cross-sectional survey, and inferences about causal relationships are subject to other interpretations. The hypothesized causal relationship between television viewing and cultivation could be tested more rigidly in longitudinal studies.

NOTES

1. Korea's broadcasting underwent a drastic structural transformation in the wave of the government-initiated realignment of media systems in November 1980. The government absorbed Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC-TV) and operates it as its own channels. Furthermore, the government obtained the majority shares (65 percent) of MBC-TV (see Lee, J. W., World Press Encyclopedia: Vol. 1 (pp. 579-594). New York:Facts on File, 1982.

2. This study generally consists of two interrelated steps:

   (1) message system analysis, which is the content analysis of samples of three Korean network dramatic programs, aimed at uncovering the most stable and recurrent patterns of representation in the world of television, and
   (2) cultivation analysis, which seeks to understand the ways in which exposure to television's messages influences audience conceptions, beliefs, and behaviors.

3. Coding is based on the following instrument:

   Recording instrument for the program: Tone of Program, Sentimentality, Place of Action, Date of Major Action, Setting of Major Action (Habitat), Culture (courtship/dating, religion, food, dress, dwelling, family size, marriage, address term, politics, economic system, music, and family), and Theme/Topic (humane, nature, science, crime, mass communications and entertainment, business, schools, religion, and intimate or close relationship).

   Recording instrument for the character cultural outlooks recording unit: sex, chronological age, social age, nationality of character, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, occupation, cohabitant, family, homemaker, parents.children, romantic involvement, role of character, character type, clothing, marriage, dwelling, setting, family, address-term, dating, food, drink, dining out, playing music, use of language, and use of product or device.

4. Forty percent of their father's occupations involved business (business merchants); 30 percent were employed (business employees); 10 percent were government & military employees; 5 percent were medical doctors, nurses, and scientists; 4 percent were educators; 3 percent were farmers; 3 percent were artists and entertainers; and 5 percent were unemployed).

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TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAM TYPE BY PERCENT

	OVERALL	KBS-TV1	KBS-TV2	MBC-TV
News/Documentaries	21.7%	33.5%	8.3%	23.5%
Drama	26.4%	22.5%	29.2%	27.2%
Variety Shows	15.8%	15.1%	17.2%	15.1%
Situation Comedies	2.6%	2.6%	2.0%	3.1%
Sports	8.9%	13.4%	10.0%	3.4%
Children's programs	11.4%	7.9%	12.1%	14.3%
Game Shows	5.2%	2.6%	6.7%	6.4%
Others	8.0%	2.4%	14.5%	7.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

1. Drama includes 'crime/detective stories,' 'movies,' and 'adventure.'
2. Variety Show includes 'light music show' and 'talk shows.'
3. Sports includes televised sports and reports of such events.
4. Others refer to non-formal program such as foreign language lessens and cooking program.

Source: The Korean TV Guide (March 1987)

TABLE 2

RISKS BY AGE AND GENDER

	Percent involved in violence	Percent involved in killing	Ratio of violents to victims	Ratio of Killers to killed
All Characters (N=722)	9.28	.55	+1.03	+1.00
Male (N=397)	13.60	1.00	-1.08	+1.00
Female (N=325)	4.00	.92	+1.60	+1.00
Males				
Children/ Adolescents (N=26)	3.85	0	+0.00	0
Young Adults (N=99)	19.20	0	-1.38	0
Settled Adults (N=218)	14.68	.46	+1.07	+1.00
Elderly (N=8)	37.50	0	+2.00	0
Females				
Children/ Adolescents (N=25)	0	0	0.00	0
Young Adults (N=111)	.45	0	-1.05	0
Settled Adults (N=141)	5.67	2.70	+3.00	+1.00
Elderly (N=20)	0	0	0.00	0

TABLE 3

RISKS BY CLASS/MARITAL STATUS

	Percent involved in violence	Percent Involved in killing	Ratio of violents to victims	Ratio of Killers to killed
BY CLASS				
Males				
Upper (N=112)	12.50	0	+1.00	0
Middle (N=116)	14.66	0	+1.12	0
Lower (N=140)	16.43	.71	-1.30	+1.00
Females				
Upper (N=58)	1.72	1.72	+0.00	+1.00
Middle (N=75)	2.60	0	-0.00	0
Lower (N=164)	6.70	1.22	+1.75	+1.00
BY MARITAL STATUS				
Males				
Not Married (N=140)	20.71	.71	-1.05	+1.00
Married (N=114)	13.16	0	-1.14	0
Females				
Not Married (N=88)	10.23	2.27	+2.00	+1.00
Married (N=172)	2.36	.58	+1.00	+1.00

TABLE 4

RISKS BY CHARACTER TYPE

	Percent involved in violence	Percent Involved in killing	Ratio of violents to victims	Ratio of Killers to killed
Males				
Good (N=59)	10.17	0	+2.00	0
Mixed (N=164)	14.02	0	+1.86	0
Bad (N=36)	69.44	2.78	+1.27	+1.00
Females				
Good (N=44)	9.09	0	+3.00	0
Mixed (N=136)	2.94	1.47	+1.00	+1.00
Bad (N=14)	35.71	14.29	+1.50	+1.00

TABLE 5

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMOUNT OF VIEWING WITH DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

	Television Viewing			
	Light %	Heavy %	Median	Gamma
Sex				
Male (N=582)	24.7	39.2	1.49	-.02
Female (N=587)	32.5	44.5	1.47	
Grade				
8th Grade (N=588)	15.5	59.2	1.99	-.57***
11th Grade (N=581)	41.8	24.3	.99	
Age				
13-14 (N=315)	15.9	58.7	1.99	-.43***
15-16 (N=336)	20.2	52.7	1.97	
17-18 (N=518)	41.7	24.5	.99	
Father's Education				
Some College (N=666)	35.0	33.5	1.00	-.35***
No College (N=469)	19.6	53.5	1.99	
Mother's Education				
Some College (N=346)	39.0	30.3	1.00	-.31***
No College (N=789)	24.1	47.1	1.45	
Income (Monthly)				
Under $750 (N=481)	18.9	53.7	2.00	-.30***
$750-$1,000 (N=259)	33.6	39.0	1.52	
Over $1,000 (N=391)	37.1	29.9	1.01	
Family Size				
3-4 (N=223)	22.9	46.9	1.52	-.16***
5-6 (N=339)	30.6	39.5	1.01	
7-8 (N=493)	40.3	35.1	1.01	
Student's Religion				
No Religion (N=513)	27.9	40.0	2.00	
Christian (N=396)	29.5	44.7	1.49	
Buddhist (N=122)	22.1	47.5	1.52	
Catholic (N=127)	38.6	33.9	1.00	

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

TV Viewing hours based on continuous data (Light= 0-1 hours per day; Heavy= over 3 hours per day).

TABLE 6

AMOUNT OF TV VIEWING AND PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE (BY SEX)

	Male				Female			
	%L	%H	CD	Gamma	%L	%H	CD	Gamma
TV Viewing								
% overestimating chances of involvement in violence	49.7	65.9	+16.2	.20**	54.8	66.1	+11.3	.17**
% overestimating jobs in law enforcement and crime detection	43.4	53.0	+9.6	.13*	54.3	65.5	+11.2	.16**
% agreeing that hit someone for a good reason	42.3	49.6	+7.3	.09	33.2	33.5	+.3	.01
% saying their cities are not safe at night	82.1	84.0	+1.9	.09	89.5	90.0	+.5	.01
% saying their neighborhoods are not safe at night	71.0	79.9	+8.9	.16**	84.2	86.9	+2.7	.01
% saying violence take place between strangers	49.7	50.7	+1.0	.01	59.1	54.3	-4.8	-.08
% overestimating violent crime	69.4	66.1	-3.3	-.05	75.1	70.7	-4.4	-.9

* p < .05 (tau)
** p < .01 (tau)
*** p < .001 (tau)

TABLE 7

AMOUNT OF TV VIEWING AND PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE (BY GRADE)

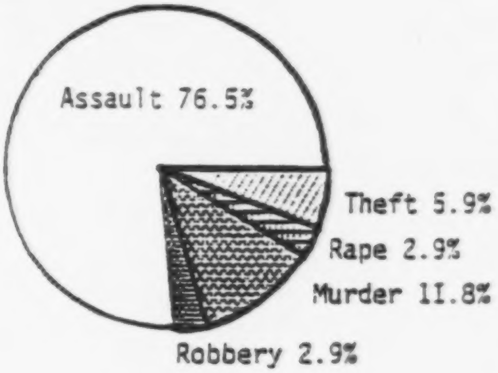
	8th Grade				11th Grade			
	%L	%H	CD	Gamma	%L	%H	CD	Gamma
TV Viewing								
% overestimating chances of involvement in violence	61.5	69.7	+8.2	.07	52.6	66.0	+13.4	.18***
% overestimating jobs in law enforcement and crime detection	58.2	64.6	+6.4	.07	49.5	59.6	+10.1	.14**
% agreeing that hit someone for a good reason	33.0	40.2	+7.2	.09	37.1	41.1	+4.0	.05
% saying their cities are not safe at night	90.0	88.6	-1.4	.05	86.1	87.1	+1.0	.03
% saying their neighborhoods are not safe at night	85.7	91.4	+5.7	.15*	84.1	89.0	+4.9	.11**
% saying violence take place between strangers	52.7	50.4	-2.3	-.04	55.0	52.6	-2.4	-.03
% overestimating violent crime	68.1	67.5	-.6	.03	72.7	68.5	-4.2	-.07

* $p < .05$ (tau)
** $p < .01$ (tau)
*** $p < .001$ (tau)

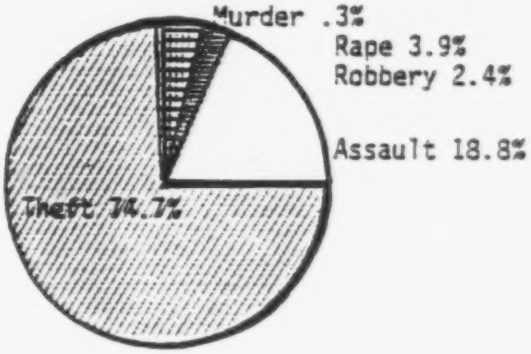
FIGURE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SERIOUS CRIMINAL OFFENSES (TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES: 34 per 722 PERSONS)

TV World: Crime Rate 4.7%



DISTRIBUTION OF SERIOUS CRIMINAL OFFENSES (TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES: 336 cases per 100,000 PERSONS)



Real World: Crime Rate .34%

EXPANDING NEWS FLOW IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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EXPANDING NEWS FLOW IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Introduction and Purpose

One of the few areas of agreement in the decade-long debate over the role of the media referred to variously as the New World Information Order (NWIO) or New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) was the need to improve regional news flow within the Third World. All sides could agree that it was easier to get information from Paris, France, to Paris, Texas, and vice versa, than from one African country to its neighbor, from one Caribbean nation to another, from one Pacific island to the next. A goal of post-NWIO/NWICO communication development promises was to do something about it.[1]

Regional news exchanges have now been established in most parts of the Third World and operate under different mass media theories and with varying degrees of success. An inventory of regional exchanges includes operations in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Gulf, and Latin America. Two global services -- the Non-Aligned News Agencies pool and Rome-based Inter Press Service -- and a wide range of cooperative agreements between Western agencies and national agencies tie even the smallest and poorest Third World country into the global information system.[2]

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[1] The research literature on this topic is a library itself. Activities of the Unesco-sponsored International Program for Development of Communication (IPDC) are reported in the IPDC's occasional newsletter and the regular newsletter of the World Press Freedom Committee. An analysis of the many studies of communication and development is contained in Jo Ellen Fair, "29 Years of Theory and Research on Media and Development: the Dominant Paradigm Impact," Gazette, 44(2):129-150 (1989). An examination of some of the alternative and regional services is included in Robert L. Stevenson, Communication, Development, and the Third World (New York: Longman, 1988). The growing importance of telecommunication in development studies is documented in Robert J. Saunders, et al., Telecommunications and Econonic Development (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), William Pierce and Nicolas Jequier, Telecommunications for Development (Geneva: International Telecommunications Union, 1983), and The Missing Link [Maitland Commission Report], (Geneva: International Telecommunications Union, 1984). World Communication Report, (Paris: Unesco, 1989), is a valuable source of data about all aspects of communication and development.

Within the various tiers of the global system, the regional exchanges are probably the weakest link. The Pan-African News Agency (PANA) is a creature of the Organization of African Unity and represents governments and government news agencies. Its meager diet of official dispatches has made no noticeable impact on scarce regional coverage in African media, which is still dominated by the Western global agencies.[3] The Caribbean News Agency, in contrast, includes Cuba's Prensa Latina news agency but is run by non-government journalists used to Western definitions of news. Most assessments indicate it has become a credible and useful service to its diverse members.[4]

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[2] See Stevenson, Communication, Development, and the Third World, and studies referenced therein, especially reports on the news agencies to the MacBride Commission and a number of news flow studies carried out in the late 1970s and early '80s. World Communication Report (Paris: Unesco, 1989) contains a summary of the status of regional services.

[3] James Brooke, "Africans Find Freeing News Isn't So Easy," New York Times, Dec. 8, 1988, p. A3; Paul Ansah, "The Pan-African News Agency (PANA) -- a Preliminary Profile," paper presented to the International Association for Mass Communication Research, meeting in Prague, 1984. A critical assessment of the NANA pool is included in Pradeep Mathur and K. M. Shrivastava, Non-Aligned Movement: New Delhi and Beyond (New Delhi: Sterling Press, 1984).

The latest -- and probably last -- area of the world to establish a regional news exchange is the South Pacific, an area of tiny, media-poor nations separated by huge distances. Since 1987, Pacnews, founded and funded by German aid, has worked to develop the region's broadcast media and to improve news flow among them. In this paper, we will describe the planet's newest regional exchange and try to evaluate its performance and potential, both in terms of its own goals and in comparison to some of the other organizations created to close the regional gaps in global news flow. Its future was made uncertain in May, 1990, when the government of Fiji ordered it off the island. Pacnews then announced plans to move temporarily to New Zealand and to continue its service while looking for a permanent home.

The Media-Poor South Pacific

Even from a North American perspective, the South Pacific is a region of staggering size. From Easter Island off the coast of South America to Guam and the Northern Marianas, the region covers almost a quarter of the earth's surface. It spans nine time zones, two days (because the international date line runs through the middle), and both northern and southern hemispheres. The region contains, depending on definition, 13 nations, plus several dependencies and semi-independent islands with varying ties to New Zealand, Britain, Australia, France and the United States.[5] Most of the countries became independent in the 1970s. Today some of the names are still unfamiliar: Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Kiribati. Others are associated with World War II battles or romantic fantasies more than with geopolitics of the 1990s.

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[4] Marlene Cuthbert, "The First Five Years of the Caribbean News Agency," Gazette, 28(1):3-15 (1981); Marlene Cuthbert, "The Caribbean News Agency: a Third World Model," Journalism Monographs No. 71 (1981);

Most of the 13 are democracies, although two coups in Fiji and unrest in several other countries suggest that the peaceful transition to democracy may be short-lived. The entire region has a total population of 5.1 million, of whom 3.5 million live in Papua-New Guinea. Among the other 12 nations, only Fiji (with 715,000) has a population greater than 500,000. Nauru, Niue, and Tuvalu have fewer than 10,000 residents.

The region comprises three distinct ethnic groups, Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian. Native languages -- none with indigenous written form -- number in the hundreds. Papua-New Guineans alone speak more than 700. Except for French Polynesia, which takes little interest in regional affairs, English is a link language, used both officially in domestic affairs and as a common regional language.

Despite the South Pacific's relatively prosperous economy, common language bond, and short tradition of democracy, it is one of the most media-poor regions of the world. Geographic distance and cultural diversity inhibit the growth of regional media; size, lack of advertising base and occasionally government policy restrict national media. Only three of the 13 countries have daily papers -- Cook Islands, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. In all others, at least one paper is published one to three times a week. In all cases, the papers are small in circulation and number of pages. Penetration ranges from about 100 per 1,000 population in the Cook Islands and Fiji to virtually zero in the smaller islands [In comparison, penetration in most Western countries ranges from about 250 to 500 copies per 1,000 people]. The only daily in Fiji and one of two in Papua-New Guinea are owned by Rupert Murdoch. Governments own one-third of the newspapers and exert some influence on most of the rest.[6]

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[5] The number 13 is used by Michael P. Hamnett and Robert C. Kiste in their 1988 report to the United States Information Agency, Issues and Interest Groups in the Pacific Islands. They are: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Papua-New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. French Polynesia is technically part of France. American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Marianas remain U.S. dependencies.

Until recently, television was available only in the French and U.S. territories. Now Papua-New Guinea has one private and one government channel; Tonga has a limited service; Western Samoa can receive programs from neighboring American Samoa, and tiny Niue introduced a cable system (with familiar services like CNN and ESPN) to try to reduce emigration. Television is important only in one form: for showing rented videotapes.

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[6] Most of the data reported here are from Hamnett and Kiste, including the figure on government ownership. For examples of government pressures, see Peter Lomas, "Familiar Ring to Pressure on Free Press," Islands Business, January 1988, p. 34; Robert Keith-Reid, "Unfriendly Isles Make It Hard to Get the News," Islands Business, October 1988, p. 20; Peter Lomas, "How Good Is Your Local Paper?" Islands Business, October 1989, p. 5.

Efforts by Australian entrepreneurs to develop conventional TV services in several countries have faltered.[7]

Because of a lack of regular broadcast television services, videos are probably more important and more influential in the South Pacific than in most other parts of the world. In the mid-1980s, surveys estimated that the average VCR family watched more than four different films a week in Apia (Western Samoa) for 3.5 hours a day and four to five different films a week in Suva, capital of Fiji.[8] Of course, VCR households are still a minority, but 10% to 20% of all households in Suva are estimated to have VCRs, and audiences of 30 to 40 often share viewing. After the coups in 1987, a curfew closed all public facilities on Sundays; it was not uncommon to see families leaving neighborhood video shops with up to a dozen tapes to carry them through a long, dull weekend. Throughout the region, stores in even the smallest villages rent cassettes of the latest Hollywood films, TV programs from the United States, Britain, and Australia, and sometimes special religious programs supplied by the active Christian missionary force. In Fiji, video stores also carry syrupy romances from India and kung fu thrillers from Hong Kong.

As is true in most Third World areas, radio is the most important medium in the South Pacific. All of the nations provide a minimal domestic service; in Fiji and the Cook Islands, commercial stations also operate. International shortwave is less accessible than in other parts of the world, partly because of the distances involved, partly because the major global broadcasters such as BBC and VOA do not aim a strong signal at the region. The only service available around the clock is Radio Australia; reception is reliable in some parts of the region but not in others without a special antenna and receiver. In 1989, Radio New Zealand promised to go back on the air with a regional service; its new broadcast facility was also supposed to include a transmitter for the BBC World Service.[9] In most of the islands, shortwave is important for two reasons. It is the only alternative to weak domestic services strongly influenced by -- if not run by -- national governments, and it is an important source of information for the national services as well. Most South Pacific domestic services regularly relay programs from the BBC or VOA or monitor them as sources for their own newscasts. Battery-powered transistor radios, usually part of an audio-cassette boom box, are ubiquitous, even in remote areas without electricity. A less-than-perfect survey of the island of Pohnpei[10], showed that 95% of households in the capital city of Kolonia (9,000 residents) had a radio and 61% had TVs for playing video cassettes. Seventy-one percent of the respondents claimed radio as the major source of news. In outlying areas of the island, 84% of the homes had radios (and 16% TVs). Respondents reported listening to the radio an average of 5 hours a day. This is especially remarkable because the only source of electricity outside the capital is an occasional portable generator. Most radios are powered by ordinary but expensive batteries.[11]

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[7] Liz Fell, "Poor Reception for TV Moguls," Pacific Islands Monthly, May 1989, p. 43.

[8] Hamnett and Kiste, p. 43; the VCR penetration figure is an estimate by the University of the South Pacific in 1988.

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[9] David Lomas, "New Pacific Voice to Stress Accuracy and Be Good Sport," Islands Business, October 1989, p. 7.

[10] One of the Federated States of Micronesia, self-governing since 1986 but with a free association relationship with the United States.

Pacnews

Pacnews (Pacific News Service) is the main activity of Pacbroad (Pacific Broadcasting Training and Development Program), which was established in 1985 by 13 Pacific Island broadcast authorities with funds from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Germany and UNESCO. The Stiftung (or foundation) is associated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), which is the party of Helmut Schmidt and Willy Brandt, now in opposition in the German federal government, and has a tradition of support for Third World communication development. The FES continues as the major underwriter of Pacnews/Pacbroad, although the German foreign aid authority -- a separate government agency -- has provided funds to upgrade equipment.

Pacnews/Pacbroad is headquartered in Suva, Fiji, which, in South Pacific terms, is large and media rich. The daily cooperative news service began operation in September, 1987, but was suspended soon afterward by a military coup that subjected all of the country's media to temporary censorship and to continuing informal pressure to avoid offending the government. Relations between Fiji's military government and Pacnews remain strained. The Fiji Broadcasting Commission, Fiji's Pacnews supplier and main customer, is caught in the middle. Pacbroad was at first given space in Fiji's Telecommunication Training Center but ordered out after the coup. It moved to its own building in 1989.

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[11] John R. Rider, "Mass Media in the Pacific; a System Without a Print Connection." Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, meeting in Washington, DC, 1989. Rider was a Fulbright professor in the FSM and conducted the survey.

Pacnews's stated objectives are a mixture of NWIO/NWICO and "free press" rhetoric:

> 1. To provide a regular news service to inform Pacific islanders of happenings in the region and not to "sell" news in the commercial sense.
>
> 2. To balance the coverage of regional events by international news organizations, whose reports are often based on a foreign concept of news, by covering not only so-called "hard" news but develoment news as well.
>
> 3. To establish a free flow of information with which journalists from the region and listeners/readers closely identify.
>
> 4. To help unite the culturally diverse audience/readership in the region.
>
> 5. To inform the international public more accurately and fully about Pacific life.[12]

In practice, members of Pacnews contribute stories by whatever means they have available -- telephone, fax, telex. The small Pacnews staff -- a permanent coordinator and assistant funded by FES, short-term trainees supplied by member organizations -- add whatever it can pick up from shortwave or other sources, including newspapers and magazines. Unlike PANA and the NANA pool, which in theory are supposed to act only as clearinghouses for material supplied by members, Pacnews exercises some control over the material it distributes. This can include simple rewriting, extensive editing, and occasionally killing of a story when its accuracy is suspect. Pacnews will also transmit a story from a third-party source, that is, a story from a source other than the broadcast service or even a source outside the country. This is standard journalistic practice in the West, of course, but contrary to the rhetoric of the NWIO/NWICO, which requires each nation to speak for itself. If a member news agency chooses not to report anything about a specific event (such as a coup) to PANA or the Pool, then nothing is transmitted. Pacnews does not follow this practice, and the occasional irritation to a government or its broadcast authority is offset by Pacnews's increased credibility. Another practice common in the Third World -- and used occasionally by Pacnews -- is for a journalist to slip information that cannot be published in domestic media to an outside reporter. For reasons that defy logic, the material then can frequently be reported, citing the outside source. With fax, it is easy enough to get information to the Pacnews newsroom, even across the thousands of kilometers that separate Fiji from other Pacific islands.

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[12] Quoted in Gerard Sullivan and Victor T. Valbuena, "Pacnews; a Study of News Exchange in the Pacific." Media Asia, 16(2):97-104 (1989). Additional data about the founding of Pacnews came from this detailed article and from a personal visit in 1988.

Pacnews prepares two or three daily newscasts that are distributed by a variety of means, although new technology has made fax the preferred medium over telex (slow and expensive) or telephone dictation (used for emergencies). A computer delivery system is planned.

Before considering whether Pacnews meets its diverse objectives, we turn to an examination of the content of the news file itself.

Method and Data

Fifteen days from mid-May to mid-June 1988, were selected systematically for analysis. Only the first newscast, which is longer than the second, was used. It is the main news file and goes to most of Pacnews's clients. The total sample contained 208 stories, an average of 14 in each newscast.[13]

The stories are, for the most part, crisply written in standard broadcast style. In contrast to the NANA pool and many Third World national agencies, the quality of the English is good, even though most writers and editors cannot claim English as a native language. The vague platitudes that pass as development news and protocol news in many Third World services are usually avoided, although a substantial part of the daily file is devoted to government statements. Stories average about 100 words and four to six sentences. At the time of the study, each newscast included 10 to 15 separate stories. The format allows receiving stations to use the lead sentence as a headline summary or to read the entire newscast as a 10-to-15-minute summary of regional news

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[13] The days represent a four-week "constructed week" sample and must be considered an availability sample. Several studies, however, have shown that such less-than-ideal samples usually produce reliable results. See the discussion of sampling in the sources in the following note.

This analysis focused on four simple, straightforward variables.[14] One was the source, which is identified in each story as one of the 13 member broadcast organizations, Pacnews itself, or Radio New Zealand, which, along with Radio Australia and theoretically other shortwave services, is occasionally quoted. Only RNZ appeared in the newscasts on the 15 days of the study.

A second variable was geographic focus, defined to distinguish among (1) the Pacific Islands, (2) Asia, New Zealand, and Australia, and (3) the rest of the world. Pacnews, of course, was organized as a regional exchange rather than as a full-service, global service and presumably gives almost its attention to regional affairs. It makes no effort to compete with global services like the BBC, Radio Australia, or the Australian Associated Press.

A third variable distinguished among (1) purely domestic events, (2) international news or events involving the host nation with at least one other country, and (3) foreign news or events reported from a source outside the country where they take place or which they include. The distinction between "foreign" and "international" news avoids the problem of deciding whether "foreign" news can take place at home (such as a parliamentary debate over foreign policy) and identifies third-country reporting (for example, a report about the coup in Fiji reported from New Zealand). Some of the widely divergent claims about the amount of foreign news in various national media can be explained by differences in the operational definition of "foreign news" used in different studies. The third-country reporting issue occurs mostly as a complaint against the Western agencies. The claim is that they violate Third World national "information sovereignty," which is supposed to give nations the right to determine what will reported about them abroad. As noted earlier, sometimes this is a tactic to get around censorship, and it allows coverage of events when domestic sources are silent or incomplete.

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[14] The variables and categories were derived from a massive study of foreign news carried out by the International Association for Mass Communication research at the request of Unesco a decade ago. The report was published as Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al., "Foreign News in the Media: International Reporting in Twenty-nine Countries (Paris: Unesco, 1985); see also Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw, Foreign News and the New World Information Order (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1984), which reports most of the data and includes the research methodology.

Finally, a simple set of topic categories was included to assess quantitatively the kinds of activities, issues, and events that the 13 Pacnews members reported about themselves. They included (1) domestic politics of all kinds; (2) international relations; (3) all military actions and activities; (4) economics, including aid and development activities; (5) anything connected to sports; (6) labor activities, including strikes; (7) a broad social category, including education, social relations, religion, and health; and (8) disruptive events, including crime, accidents, and national disaster.

Stories were coded directly from the file copies of the newscasts at Pacnews headquarters. No formal assessment of coder reliability was made because the stories were short and straightforward, and only the final variable required any coder judgment.

Results

Tables 1 through 6 show the results of this simple content analysis. To reduce the diverse sources to some regional pattern, we then collapsed the original set to the three dominant ethnic groupings of the South Pacific -- Polynesian, Melanesian, and Micronesian. This regional variable was then used to divide the other three variables and allows us to assess whether the three subregions of the Pacific Islands receive more or less equivalent coverage.

A comparable but more detailed analysis was carried out in September 1988, by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center in Singapore (AMIC).[15] While most of the variables differed, some are close to those used in this study and are included for comparison.

The quantitative results are consistent with qualitative assessments and support the conclusion that Pacnews is doing what it wants to do. The larger members and outside sources provide information disproportionately, but this is inevitable given the level of activity and information-gathering capabilities there compared to that of the smaller islands. From the perspective of

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[15] A rather extensive summary of the study is reported by the authors in Sullivan and Valbuena.

Tonga, Fiji represents the bright lights and big city, and New Zealand is a giant of staggering proportions. While some members have complained about the heavy contribution of Radio Fiji, Pacnews itself, and the two external radio services, Pacnews would not be viable without them.

Pacnews focuses heavy heavily on the islands themselves and the broader region including Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. The tiny proportion of stories devoted to purely foreign news suggests a very limited use of third-party reporting. Overwhelmingly, the service allows the members to speak to each other about events taking place at home or involving themselves and other countries. The distribution of topics suggests a definition of news less devoted to disruption than one finds in the popular media in Europe and North America, but with a willingness to acknowledge crime and social problems. Economic topics, including development, get heavy coverage, but this is a category that the global agencies often are accused of ignoring. It is quite reasonably more newsworthy to the Pacific Islands than to Murdoch's London Sun.

The crosstab suggests that the external sources ("Other" includes Radio New Zealand and Pacnews itself) are frequently the link to the broader region of Australasia but not necessarily to any single type of story. Analysis by Sullivan and Valbuena shows that the superpowers and even Britain, which retains obvious symbolic as well as practical links to the region, are virtually unrepresented in Pacnews files. Whether by design or happenstance, Pacnews remains overwhelmingly focused on the

Pacific Islands themselves. The rest of the Pacnews "world" consists almost entirely of the regional superpowers of Australia and New Zealand and a very distant Asia.

Discussion

At its annual meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in October 1989, the Pacific Islands Broadcast Association (PIBA), which is virtually synonymous with Pacnews members and customers, took justified pride in its accomplishments. The service was functioning and was successful by the pragmatic criterion of utilization. Usage patterns varied, but the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corp. (SIBC) seemed to be typical.

SIBC provides a single national service that is broadcast on a weak AM signal to the main island of Guadacanal and on shortwave to outlying islands. The only news consists of a few handouts that appear to come directly from the government, read several times a day and a rebroadcast of a 30-minute BBC World Service news and public affairs program carried once a day. The Pacnews report is read in its entirety after the local news and is listeners' only exposure to information between the purely domestic focus of SIBC itself and the global perspective of the BBC. The larger services tended to integrate Pacnews stories into a more sophisticated, locally produced newscast, but the smaller islands are so limited in staff, technology, and money that they have no choice other than a rip-and-read newscast from the fax machine. Without Pacnews, regional coverage would be nothing but an occasional story monitored from Radio Australia or an event important enough to make the BBC.

The PIBA delegates discussed plans to expand services with coverage of the Commonwealth Games in Zealand and special Christmas programs that could include tapes on the holiday customs in the various islands and audio greeting cards to and from people away from home. Adding a voice component to the PacNews operation, of course, would represent a giant step technically and financially. A simple computer-based network to replace the present distribution system is also planned. Money will come from the German bilateral aid program.

A few complaints were aired at the PIBA conference: technical problems, timing of bulletins, and dominance by Fiji, which, in the scale of the Pacific Islands, is big, powerful and always newsworthy. Problems with government censorship always loom in the background and occasionally intrude on daily operations, although a real confrontration was avoided. Information ministry officials and journalists eyed each other cautiously in Honiara. The commercial FM station in Fiji was denied membership (and access to Pacnews services) because of objection from Radio Fiji. More than anything else, the future of Pacnews seems linked to four considerations:

1. Political stability. Democratic governments not threatened by domestic unrest or coups tend to be tolerant of critical, Western-style reporting. Under real or imagined threat, they almost always seize the media and take control of all incoming and outgoing information. At that point, a cooperative news exchange fails. While the Pacific Islands are

still relatively peaceful, the coups in Fiji and ethnic unrest in New Caledonia and Papua-New Guinea are disturbing omens.

2. Economic growth. The Fiji coups and subsequent exodus of Indians turned a relatively prosperous economy into shambles. Other islands are in danger of following Fiji into the sinkhole of economic chaos. Even if violence is averted, the economies of the the tiny island nations are fragile, usually linked to one or two products or industries, and often dependent on foreign aid. Without economic growth, even the modest financial requirements of Pacnews and its member broadcasters will not be met. Pacnews members do not pay for the service but are expected to pay modest membership fees and supply an editor periodically for training and help in the newsroom. Some of the smaller broadcasters can do neither.

3. Permanent funding. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation and German foreign aid agency are committed to development of Pacnews but not to permanent funding. Self-financing is not realistic given the poverty of most members and the relatively high (for the Pacific Islands) costs of maintaining even the present level of service. The steady decline in cost of telecommunication services and related hardware offers some hope, but expenditures that North American news organizations would pay out of petty cash are major costs at Pacnews and frequently outside the budget.

One possibility is to establish ties with larger regional or global news organizations, such as the Australian Associated Press, or to increase the number of paying customers, such as

Hawaii Public Radio and the Voice of America. The problem is that the world is awash with information, and the Pacific Islands fade from sight in Washington or London. The market in the rest of the world for its information is limited, although some specialized customers probably could be found among government agencies, private organizations with a regional interest and multinational corporations.

Once the news service is computerized, it could be sold to any of several electronic libraries, which would provide it with visibility and royalties. Interlink, the U.S. version of Inter Press Service, had some success getting into corporations, government agencies, and foundations (but virtually none getting into news media), but neither that modest success nor marketing through an electronic data base was enough to keep it afloat. The parent IPS, however, is part of the Nexis system, which gives it visibility because most data-base searches automatically include it.

4. Purpose. The most general question for Pacnews -- assuming economic stability and growth -- is one faced by all of the regional exchanges. It is whether to remain mostly an exchange mechanism for information supplied by its members or to become an independent news service, which is likely to irritate its customers occasionally and their governments regularly. The preference of most Pacnews journalists seems clearly to be the latter, but too sharp a move in that direction could jeopardize the organization's relations with the governments that control access and participation of national broadcasters.

Without credibility and some measure of independence, Pacnews cannot hope to do more than PANA or the Non-Aligned News Agencies pool, neither of which contributes noticeably to redressing the global imbalance in news flow or, more importantly, filling real needs in information-poor Third World countries. The Caribbean News Agency, CANA, is a better model for Pacnews than PANA because it serves mostly democracies and, like the Pacific Islands, operates in a tradition of independent journalism. Like CANA, Pacnews is pragmatic, realistic, and concerned with putting out a useful product. It has not tried to redefine news to conform to a vague New World Information Order or replace the global agencies that still dominate the global news system.

Within the flood of information that flows around the world in the age of instant communication, Pacnews is a trickle, but to the several million people scattered over a quarter of the globe, it is virtually the only link to one another. It occasionally annoys governments -- a good sign for any news operation -- and helps journalists improve their professional performance and stand together. By these criteria, as well as its own goals, Pacnews is a success.

Postscript[16]

In early May, 1990, the government of Fiji ordered Pacnews and the larger Pacbroad operation off the island. The government's vague justification was that Pacbroad had violated its original agreement to operate only a training program, a claim Pacbroad denied. In fact, the decision was apparently based on a suspicion of Pacnews (and journalists in general) that began with the first coup. Although military censorship was in effect only briefly after the coup, the government excluded foreign reporters on several occasions and maintained informal but effective pressure on the local media. As a quasi-government agency, the Fiji Broadcasting Corp. was particularly vulnerable.

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[16] This information came from a telegram from USIS Suva to USIA in Washington and from an AFP dispatch monitored by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

Pacnews announced that it would move temporarily to New Zealand while looking for permanent facilities elsewhere among its member islands. Several countries -- Papua-New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tonga -- indicated an interest in having the program. Except for Papua-New Guinea, the alternatives were smaller, less developed and more isolated than Fiji.

The Fiji government's order affected more than the Pacnews service itself. After operating for two years in facilities supplied by the Fiji telecommunication authority, Pacbroad moved into its own building in 1989. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation had invested F$100,000 for construction, renovation and equipping the facility. Pacbroad House, the new facility, was to house both Pacnews and a variety of training programs carried out by Pacbroad. Pacnews also cooperated with the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Fiji on a certificate program for journalists. USP is funded by a consortium of Pacific Island nations and operates both a residential campus in Suva, the capital of Fiji, and a large extension program -- including a satellite-based, interactive radio system for tutorials and seminars-- throughout the region. Both the USP-based programs and Pacbroad's own training activities were disrupted by the expulsion order.

Table 1. Source of Pacnews Stories, May-June 1988.

	n=208
Radio Fiji	20%
Radio Vanuatu	4
Western Samoa	1
Pacnews	3
Papua-New Guinea	22
2AP/Apia (Western Samoa)	8
Radio Cooks	5
Radio Kiribati	4
Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corp.	7
Radio Tonga	8
Radio Tuvalu	2
Raio New Zealand	14
Radio Marshalls	3
Radio Belau	0

Table 2: Source of Pacnews Stories, September 1988*

	n=420
Radio Fiji	20%
Radio New Zealand	18
Papua New Guinea	15
Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corp.	10
Western Samoa	9
Radio Tonga	7
Pacnews	5
Radio Kiribati	5
Radio Vanuatu	3
Radio Australia	3
Radio Cooks	3
Radio Marshalls	1
Radio Tuvalu	1
Radio Belau	0

*From Sullivan and Valbuena.

Table 3: Focus of Pacnews, May-June 1988.

	n=208
Pacific Islands	57%
Australasia	26
Rest of world	17

Table 4: Type of Pacnews News Story, May-June, 1988

	n=208
Domestic news	51%
International activities	45
Foreign news	4

Table 5: Main Topic of Pacnews Stories, May-June 1988.

	n=208
Domestic politics	22%
International relations	14
Military activities	7
Economics/Aid/Development	25
Sports	2
Labor	2
Education/Religion/Health	10
Crime/Accidents/Natural Disasters	17

Table 6: Main Topic of Pacnews Stories, September, 1988*

	n=420
Government (domestic politics and military)	13%
International relations	10
Law enforcement and crime	9
Education/Culture/Religion	9
Economy and Trade	8
Economic aid and development	7
Regional organizations	7
Industrial relations	7
Sports and entertainment	6
Transportation	6
Public health	6
Natural disasters and accidents	5
Environment and nuclear-free zone	4
Race relations	4

*From Sullivan and Valbuena.

Table 7: Focus, Story Type and Main Topic by Regional Source, May-June, 1988.

	Poly-nesia n=29	Mela-nesia n=113	Micro-nesia n=31	Other n=35
Geographic focus:				
Pacific Islands	66%	66%	58%	23%
Australasia	17	19	19	63
Other	17	16	23	14
Type of Story:				
Domestic News	45%	60%	36%	37%
International relations	52	36	55	60
Foreign events	4	4	10	3
Main topic:				
Domestic politics	10%	27%	16%	20%
International affairs	10	12	19	20
Military activities	0	7	7	11
Econ/Aid/Development	45	22	23	20
Sports	4	0	13	0
Labor	0	4	0	3
Educ/Religion/Health	10	12	10	6
Crime/Accident/Disaster	21	17	13	17

King Wachirawut of Thailand (1910-1925): A Pioneering Use of Media to Promote Nationalism

Stephen L. W. Greene

Abstract

Most research on the developing world's use of media to promote nationalism has naturally concentrated on the post-World War II era when the majority of these countries achieved independence. But many decades earlier, Thailand, a Southeast Asian nation which had been left intact as a buffer state between English and French interests, tried to reform its own society.

King Wachirawut of Thailand (1910-1925) was the last in a series of three absolute monarchs who revolutionized Thai life. His reign provides one of the earliest examples of a traditional, non-Western leader's innovative use of media and mass organizations to foster increased national self-awareness.

Most research on the developing world's use of media to promote nationalism has naturally concentrated on the post-World War II era when the majority of these countries achieved independence. But many decades earlier, Thailand, a Southeast Asian nation which had been left intact as a buffer state between English and French interests, tried to reform its own society. King Wachirawut of Thailand (1910-1925) was the last in a series of three absolute monarchs who revolutionized Thai life. His reign provides one of the earliest examples of a traditonal, non-Western leader's innovative use of media and mass organizations to foster increased national self-awareness.

Wachirawut faced many of the same problems leaders in India, Africa and Asia would encounter in the post-World War II era. What was the appropriate level of culture to promote? Should a variety of cultures be encouraged? Which cultural traditions should be emphasized? And how should the state relate to external cultures, especially former imperialist powers?[1] The fact that absolute monarch Wachirawut and these later revolutionary leaders had seemingly so little in common can only make their similar approaches seem more remarkable. They both chose monistic cultures rooted in a distant past which promised future unity. They diverged with Wachirawut's prediliction to accentuate a high level, non-democratic culture.

Thailand was that rare late 19th century Third World nation which modernized her society and government untethered by the direct control of a foreign power. The requisite need to reform was no less pressing because of the absence of colonialism. Reform, in itself, was a means to escape domination. It brought the Thai government more into line with accepted Western practices of judicial, economic and administrative procedures thereby facilitating the growth of domestic and international trade unencumbered by indigenous practices little understood by foreigners. The result of these reforms, which began in the mid-1800s, was a profound transformation of the traditional economic and political systems.

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[1] For a perceptive look at how some other nations handled these problems, see Marriott, McKim "Cultural Policies in the New States" pp. 27-56 in Clifford Geertz (ed.) *Old Societies and New States*, Free Press, New York: 1963

This reform process had its origins in the reign of King Mongkut (1851-1868).[2] His efforts to redefine the basis for the legitimacy of the monarchy along Buddhist and paternalistic lines together with his awareness of Western concepts paved the way for the actual governmental and social reforms of his son, King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910).[3] Because of the work of these two men, King Wachirawut, who ascended the throne in 1910, inherited an uparalleled degree of actual power. He presided over 11 functionally oriented ministries no longer merely as the figurative head of state, but as the actual director of the administration. The King's own background was also unique for a Thai monarch. He had spent one-third of his 30 years of life, spanning his impressionable teen-age years, in England as a student at Eton, Sandhurst and Oxford and, later, as a soldier with the Royal Durham Light Infantry. In 1902, after making an inspection of important industrial sites in England and on the continent, he had returned home via the United States and Japan.

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[2] See Moffat, Abbot *Mongkut, King of Siam*, Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961

[3] For more on this reign, see Wyatt, D. *The Beginnings of Modern Education in Thailand*, Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1966

During Wachirawut's seven year residence in Bangkok as crown prince he had ample time to compare the situation in Thailand with that which he had experienced in England. He soon became convinced that the primary malady in Thai society was the lack of a corporate spirit among the people. He believed the previous reforms had brought improvements in the structure of government, but had failed to remedy the lack of cooperation between the government and the public and between individual civil servants. What was needed now, Wachirawut felt, was a complementary policy to promote unity in the society. But how could he reach his mostly ambivalent subjects in his far-flung kingdom? The King turned to the popular media for support, importing Western forms whenever needed. In his many newspaper articles, essays, poems, plays and speeches, the King became his own chief propagandist for nationalism. He entreated the Thai to unite in body and spirit to defend their nation, king and religion. He created mass organizations such as the Wild Tiger Corps and Tiger Cubs to provide a vehicle for the dissemination of his teachings and as a means for harnessing the nationalistic fervor he expected to arise. Throughout the reign, the King kept up a barrage of prose aimed at inciting a deeper commitment to national unity. He also warned of dire consequences should his words go unheeded.

The King could alter his writing style to meet his desired ends. In his essays, he wrote in a simple manner, making certain not to confuse his readers by using difficult words or complex structures. On the other hand, in his poems, the King was subtle and creative, even to the point of inventing his own verse form. In English, Wachirawut was nearly as talented, writing fluid sentences punctuated by numerous chatty asides. The King's range of topics reflected his own varied background. He was keenly interested in history, geography, literature, military science, Thai dancing, and current political events. The King's intentions for writing were didactic; through moral lessons he hoped to be able to rouse the Thai people out of the stupor into which he envisaged they had fallen.

Wachirawut, or Rama VI, as he is more commonly known, did not limit himself only to criticizing Thai society. He perceived his role in a wider context, as a member of the dwindling elite of absolute monarchs. In 1914, the King leveled a blast at the Young Turks in Turkey characterizing them as "partially educated men who set a very high value on themselves." This, the King continued, "naturally made them contemptuous toward their elders."[4] Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese Revolution was also a favorite topic for the King. In a satirical essay, *Uttarakuru*,, he attempted to belittle the Chinese leaders by demonstrating that socialism was not a new concept but had existed for thousands of years. With the following rhetorical questions he made his point. "As long as human nature remains as it is, so long shall we have new apostles who prate of 'new' theories, which are as old as the hills! Shall we get any nearer to such an idealist state? Will such theories ever become really practicable outside of dream land or the lunatic asylum?"[5]

Angry outbursts such as these were not confined to foreigners. Wachirawut repeatedly attacked his numerous critics in Thailand. They, too, were ill-educated, idealistic, and self-possessed in the eyes of the King. On one occasion, he struck out at his opponents in the field of journalism in the following manner: "Most of the best educated and most capable men of letters are employed in the government service, and have no time for anything but occasional contributions to journals. Those who do write regularly therefore are either men of very indifferent education or dismissed officials with mountains of grievances against the government. That is the reason why the tone of most Siamese journals has been distinctly against the government."[6]

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[4] Asavabahu (pseud. for Wachirawut), "Clogs on Our Wheels" in *Siam Observer* newspaper, April 23, 1915 p.4.

[5] Wachirawut, *Uttarakuru* (A cremation volume for Chao Fa Phetcharatsudasirisoph), Bangkok 2508 (1965), p. 20.

Wachirawut was personally convinced of the benefits of modern science, economic theory and the like, but he was firmly opposed to what his critics like to call modern politics. Rama VI was an avowed conservative who maintained an elitist view of legislation. He once wrote, "In our country, there is a proverb to the effect that 'the behavior seen to be proper amongst the quality is imitated by the slaves' (meaning thereby that the slaves will ever ape their superiors) which I observe is still very true even in these days. Therefore, in legislation one has to take the upper classes as the criterion. Any law that is able to command the respect of the upper class could not be found oppressive by the lower."[7] The King was particularly incensed by repeated suggestions that he introduce a constitutional parliamentary system. In a newspaper article, Wachirawut offered his opinion on how a meeting of parliament would be handled. His hypothetical meeting featured the asinine behavior of the loquacious government and opposition party leaders. Both men made long, nonsensical speeches. Finally, as cries of "quiet" and "no more" rang out from the back benchers, a gang of Chinese invaded the floor throwing everyone into a wild melee.[8]

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[6] Asavabahu, "Clogs," p. 4.

[7] Thailand National Archives (Hereafter cited as: N.A.), 5/6 R.VI Memorandum by Rama VI in reply to Kromma Phra Sawasdi concerning the principles of monogamy and polygamy to be adopted as in England, June 3, 1913.

As a conservative, the King naturally looked to the past for inspiration, but he avoided drawing upon his father's and grandfather's reigns for resource material. Instead, he went all the way back to the sixteenth century to the reign of King Naresuan who had re-established Thai hegemony over Ayuthia after 15 years of Burmese control, and even further back to the thirteenth century and the reign of Phra Ruang, the half-legendary founder of Sukhothai, the earliest Thai kingdom in Southeast Asia. Phra Ruang was the King's favorite historical character. He wrote three different versions of a play about this monarch as well as an account of his field trip to the remains of the old kingdom.[9] In the figure of Phra Ruang, Rama VI invested extraordinary qualities. He was courageous, resourceful, intelligent, and, above all, a natural leader who was able to inspire confidence and command respect.

Phra Ruang's task of ruling, according to Wachirawut, was easier then than in the twentieth century. The perpetual warfare in the 1200s made it mandatory that "every person consider himself as a member of the same group, gathered together in health and sorrow and together in death. To be united was a genuine necessity since the enemy surrounded them everywhere. They all had to be of the same purpose so that the group as a whole could be defended. Every Thai had a duty to perform in fighting the enemy and defending the group in the time of war."[10] However, the very success of the system led to its eventual downfall. As wars became less frequent the Thai became more interested in peaceful pursuits; the military system decayed. All males no longer had to serve in the army; cash payments could be substituted in lieu of actual service. Accordingly, the unity that had accompanied the war state also declined. Peace, for the King, was the main cause of the deterioration of unity in the modern Thai state. Wachirawut explained that during long periods of peace,"People have time to think of the pleasures and gratification of self, so that they grow selfish, their outlook on life and things in general becomes narrower and narrower until nothing is so important to them as their own selves."[11]

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[8] Wachirawut, "Ryang Raikam Prachum Paliment Syam," (The Report on the Meeting of the Siamese Parliament), in *Prachum Nithan Phraradchaniphon Radchakan Thi 6*, (A Meeting for the Stories of Rama VI), Bangkok, 1925.

[9] Phra Ruang, Bangkok, (Khrusapha), 1959, is perhaps the most well known version. "Ryang Thiaw Myang Phra Ruang," (Travels in the Country of Phra Ruang), in *Wachirawut Thanuson*, 2508, (In Remembrance of Wachirawut, 1965), pp. 97-199, is about his visit to the remains of Sukhothai.

The King was willing to go one step further and proclaim that war could be beneficial to mankind. "In a way, I agree with the German writers who say that was is actually a blessing in disguise because war compels one to think of something bigger and greater than one's self."[12]

Rama VI, realizing that a conflict with any of Thailand's neighbors would be foolhardy, attempted to do the next best thing: simulate the conditions of war. He entreated the Thai to unite in body and spirit to defend the nation, king, and religion from the incursions of the country's enemies. Who these enemies were supposed to be was never made specific, but considering that Thailand had lost one-third of her territory to England and France during the lifetime of the King, it would not be presumptuous to place these two countries at the top of the list. Later, after the attempted coup d'etat of 1912, the range of enemies was expanded to encompass internal ones as well.

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[10] Wachirawut, "Na Thi Pracam Tua Khon Thug Khon" (The Regular Duty of Every Person), in *Plug Cai Sya Pa* (On Encouraging the Wild Tigers), a cremation volume for Nai Thong Suk Nakhathan, Bangkok, 2508, (1965), p. 28.

[11] Asavabahu , "Clogs," p. 4.

[12] Asavabahu, "Clogs," p. 4

The key words of nation, religion, and king were obvious borrowings from the British, "God, king, and country." Wachirawut was not lax in explaining these new concepts to the Thai. In doing so, he tailored their meanings to fit his desired ends.

For the concept of nation Wachirawut was fond of using the word "chat" (from Pali, chati, meaning birth or origin) to the exclusion of other possible words such as "prathed" (from Pali and Sanskrit "desa," meaning country) or "ban koed myang non" (from Thai, literally meaning house born town lie, i.e. motherland). "Chat" in the sense of nation connotates the sum of the people while "prathed" in the sense of nation connotates the sum of the inanimate components. "Chat," thus, reflected Wachirawut's primary concern with personal relationships rather than with structural ones. In comparison with "ban koed myang non," which was of uncertain origin buried in the past, the word "chat" was of a recent, emotionally-charged origin. In 1908, King Chulalongkorn upon his return to Thailand from Europe had gone directly to Chantaboon province which had just been returned to Thai control by the French. He welcomed the inhabitants of the province back to the Thai nation, using the term "chat Thai" for the first time ever.[13]

Rama VI further developed the concept of nation by rejecting the notion that a nation had to have complete independence to be a genuine nation.[14] Instead, the King argued, language should be the primary determinant. "Language binds people together more than anything else. There is nothing else that makes people feel more a part of a group than to be able to speak the same language."[15]

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[13] Kasem Sirisumpundh, *Emergence of the Modern National State in Burma and Thailand*, Unpub. Ph.D. Thesis , U. of Wisconsin, 1962, pp. 211-212.

Merely speaking a language did not make an individual part of a particular nation. In addition, one had to be loyal to the nation. In the case of Thailand, being loyal to the nation meant, in effect, being loyal to the king. If a person were not loyal to the king, then he had to be considered a person without a nation.[16] Therefore, to be a member of the Thai nation was a simple either/or proposition. One could not, by the King's definition, be a spectator to nation-building. One had to believe in and act according to the policy of the nation's rulers without question. To make sure that no one would misunderstand him, Wachirawut offered the following example: "We are all in one boat. The duty of all is to help paddle. If we don't paddle and only sit back all the time, the dead weight in the boat will slow us down. Each person must decide whether to paddle and not argue with the helmsman, or not to paddle. If a person refuses to paddle then he should jump out of the boat and swim. He just shouldn't sit there and weigh down the boat. If ballast for the boat is needed, a chunk of stone is better than such a man because it won't argue with the helmsman."[17]

The helmsman, of course, was the king. Wachirawut believed that the monarchy was the primary strength of the Thai nation. He saw the monarchy's long tradition dating back to the reign of Phra Ruang as providing the stability needed during the process of nation-building. The king was the personification of the Thai state. It was the one element to which all Thai, to be Thai, had to be loyal. Yet the king did not only steer the ship of state through the troubled waters, but also drew up the charts showing where the dangerous waters were. It was in this capacity that Wachirawut hoped to excel. He repeatedly remonstrated against the behavior of the Thai, which he felt was incorrect.

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[14] Wachirawut, "Khwan Pen Chat Doi Thae Cing" On Becoming a Genuine Nation), in *Pramuan Bot Phraradchaniphon* (A Compilation of Royal Writings), Bangkok, Khrusapha 2498, (1955,) p.88.

[15] Wachirawut, "Khwan Pen," p. 93.

[16] Wachirawut, "Khwan Pen," p. 95.

[17] Wachirawut, "Khwan Pen," p.97-98.

Rama VI warned against undue reliance upon the help fo foreigners. Thailand could still take care of herself, but if the trend toward dependency on the overseas Chinese and Westerners continued Thailand could expect to experience real trouble. As a remedy, the King suggested that all Thai buy locally produced products such as sugar and cloth instead of foreign brands to bolster the domestic economy.[18] In addition, Wachirawut warned against imitating Westerners. He pointed out that to get drunk or to tell a lie and then excuse yourself by saying that you were following accepted Western practices would only fool yourself.[19] He laid the blame for the increased frequency of this type of behavior on Westerners residing in Bangkok. "Without a doubt contacts with low class Europeans have had the most unfortunate results on the morality of our youth. It is really the same as the 'fire water' method used among the Red Indians though it is lucky that we have an enlightened religion which undoubtedly has been the means of restraining a large proportion of our people from utter degeneracy unlike the poor Red Indians who do not possess the same advantage."[20]

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[18] Asavabahu (pseud. for Wachirawut), *Myang Thai Cong Tyn Thoed* (Thailand must wake up), Bangkok: Caroen Rad, no date, p. 31.

[19] Asavabahu, "Clogs," p. 4.

Due to his long residence abroad, Wachirawut felt compelled to make the Thai cognizant of the country's low international status. He wanted to make them aware of a larger entity than their own immediate surroundings so that the country's shortcomings as well as accomplishments could be seen in the proper perspective. International prestige could only be gained at the expense of sacrificing individual pleasure for that of the community. In some fields such as manufacturing the King realized that it would be a long time, if ever, that Thailand could hope to be on a par with Europe and the United States. However, in others, such as societal relations, Thailand could do better than just reaching parity and could actually outdo the West. While advocating a parental reform law Wachirawut wrote, "Should we adopt in our law the principle, that all children of a man, no matter of which kind of wife [primary wife, secondary wife, or secret wife] should be recognized as the legitimate children, we Siamese would then, actually, be going in advance of Europe in the way of providing justice for the children."[21]

The overseas Chinese, as the most numerous foreigners in Thailand, received the brunt of Wachirawut's criticism. In such essays as *Jews of the East* and *Mai Chob Thai* (Don't Like Thai) he castigated them for their supposed love of money, refusal to accept Thai culture, restrictive trade practices and the like. A general strike of Chinese workers in Bangkok just prior to the King's ascension to the throne had greatly influenced him. This had been the first general strike in Thailand's history and had brought to the public's notice the consequences of the increased

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[20] Asavabahu, "Clogs," p. 4.

[21] N.A., R VI 5/6, "An Additional Memo," June 5, 1913, by Rama VI.

Chinese immigration during his father's reign. During the strike, Wachirawut had assembled a group of Mahadlek (Royal Pages) and led them in a game of "Catching Chinese." Everyone took a role, some as policemen and some as Chinese and played throughout the night on the lawns of his Royal palace for several months.[22]

Rama VI was careful to add the Thai should not hate foreigners, but just not trust them completely. "We have to remember that Thai and foreigners have different characteristics. This does not mean that we should hate foreigners. But we should remember that they don't think the same way as we do. They will drink, trade and be friendly with us, but we cannot hope that they'll die with us ["die friends" in Thai means genuine friends]."[23] Throughout the reign, Wachirawut seemed to follow his own advice. He continued to berate the Chinese, but never translated his feelings into an actual program of suppression. The King realized that they had a stranglehold on some spheres of the domestic economy. The only way to break this hold was to encourage more Thai into the business profession. The Chinese as a group were also a handy tool for promoting nationalism. Wachirawut used them as a grindstone on which to whet Thai nationalism. The King remained aloof from European society in Bangkok. He served as Honorary President of several clubs, but never took an active interest in them. He also made no foreign visits until 1924 when for the first and only time during the reign the King visited nearby Malaya and Singapore.

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[22] Sunthonphiphit, Phraya ,"Suan Anuson" (The Field of Remembrance), in *Wachirawut Thanuson* (In Remembrance of Wachirawut) 2510, (1967), pp. 235-236.

[23] Asavabahu, *Myang Thai*, p. 30.

Finally, the religion referred to in his trilogy denoted Hinayana Buddhism, the dominant religion of the country. Wachirawut was fond of comparing Buddhism with Mohammedism and, especially, Christianity. According to the King, Buddhism, unlike the other two, was a religion for the intellect. To illustrate this point he used the virgin birth of Jesus as an example. He asked the Thai people to decide whether a woman could have a son and still remain a virgin.[24] Buddhism, on the contrary, had nothing as unbelievable as that, he said. Everyone knew that Buddha was the natural son of a natural mother and father.[25] Summing up, Wachirawut offered this concise statement as to why Buddhism, a religion of the intellect, was better than Christianity and Mohammedism, which were religions of the emotions: "In these latter two, one has to start with faith before one can believe; but in Buddhism, one starts with a belief in voluntary observance or religious devotion and then the faith grows up."[26]

The King believed that Buddhism provided durability for Thai society, in the sense of being a power to resist destructive forces. It accomplished this in several ways. As the religion of the overwhelming majority of the people, Buddhism was a common denominator no matter whether one was a peasant in an isolated hamlet or a civil servant in Bangkok. Buddha's teachings also helped to regulate interpersonal relationships. Through an adherence to dharma, one was able to overcome feelings of self-indulgence that often led to acts of depravity. According to Wachirawut, if the Thai "wish to live in peace and happiness in any community it is really necessary to conform ourselves to the principles of morality and compassion so that our neighbors can be friendly with us without suspicion or fear."[27] Buddhism was also used to explain the reason for socio-economic classes in Thai society. Rama VI explained that in Buddhism people were like a vehicle; they had to have four wheels to be stable. The front wheels were qualities of upbringing and heritage which could only be acquired by men born into good homes and families. The rear wheels were qualities of good behavior and intelligence which anyone could possess. The rulers of the country had to have all four wheels. The King hastened to add that anyone through hard work and perseverance could establish his family so that it too would have four wheels.[28]

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[24] Wachirawut, *Thetsana Sya Pa* (Sermon to the Wild Tigers), Bangkok, p. 48.
[25] Wachirawut, *Thetsana Sya Pa* , p. 50.
[26] Wachirawut, *Thetsana Sya Pa* , p. 51.

Buddhism was also viewed as having the potential to inspire a more positive type of behavior than merely regulating and explaining societal relationships. In this respect, Wachirawut was particularly incensed by some people's belief that Buddhism was primarily a religion of meditation. He rejected this notion entirely. Instead, he said the essence of Buddha's teachings was "do good, receive good; do evil, receive evil. One has to do one or the other, evil or good. If one doesn't do anything then one won't receive anything."[29] Buddhism as a positive force could best be seen on the battlefield. Those fighting men with a belief in Buddha's teachings would not flee because their belief in dharma strengthened their courage and convinced them that the sacrifice of their life was an advantage.[30] Finally, Rama VI reminded the Thai that their country was the last line of defense for Buddhism. The first and second lines had already fallen (Ceylon and Burma) and now it was up to Thailand to make the last stand. If the people didn't accept this responsibility the King warned, they would be disgracing generations of Thai to come and, more importantly, ensuring the end of Buddhism.[31]

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[27] Wachirawut, *PhraphuttacchaoTrad Ru Arai* (What is the Knowledge Attained by the Buddha on His Enlightenment?), Bangkok, 2468, (1925), p. 34.

[28] Asavabahu (pseud. for Wachirawut), "Rod Si Lo Man Khong Kwa Rod Song Lo Mi Chai" (A Four Wheel Vehicle is More Stable Than a Two Wheel Vehicle, Isn't It?), in *Pramuan Bot Phraradchaniphon* (A Compilation of Royal Writings), Bangkok (Khrusapha), 2498, (1955), pp. 157-162.

[29] Wachirawut, *Thedsana Sya Pa*, p. 64.

The concept of unity was central to Rama VI's ideas. He was perceptive enough to realize that unity could not be achieved through force or legislation since the independently minded populace would more than likely reject the idea outright. Wachirawut put his faith in voluntary associations which, even though in the short term would require more time to become established, in the long term would be more successful since their members would not have felt coerced into joining. These associations, ideally should cut across class and occupational boundaries giving masses of people from all walks of life an opportunity to meet together. Interacting within a unit would provide a valuable object lesson for discovering the necessity of sacrificing personal pleasure for those of a larger entity. No matter what the expressed purposes of any particular association were -- sports, commerce, research -- the effects would directly benefit the Thai nation. Groups were more easily mobilized and influenced than individuals. These associations under the supreme tutelage of the King would act as viable peer groups to instill correct behavior in their members.

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[30] Wachirawut, *Thedsana Sya Pa*, p. 1.

[31] Wachirawut, *Thedsana Sya Pa*, p. 84.

Even while Wachirawut tinkered with associations and dabbled in the popular press, he yearned for a simpler time, one in which the monarch was primarily a military and intellectual leader at the head of a clan of warriors who were unanimous in their devotion to the king and the nation. Wachirawut's fancies, however, conflicted with the realities of the Thai state in the twentieth century. The king was now the director of the administration. He was expected to be the legislator of new laws in addition to the adjudicator of traditional ones.

Wachirawut did lay broad policy guidelines and exhort his people to greater efforts, but he had little time to do much more. His nearly 200 journalistic and literary works completed during his reign showed how he preferred to spend his time. He was not the first Thai king to take up writing. Several others had engaged in literary pursuits, but they had confined themselves to history, customs, biography, religion and commentary on traditional literature.[32] Even his father, Rama V, who had broken with this tradition still wrote to entertain the reader by dealing with "imaginary events and people in the contemporary scene."[33]

But Wachirawut commented on real issues and real people. And he freely gave advice on how people should behave. He urged the Thai to support the local economy by not buying non-essential foreign goods, but then he turned around and bought such "essential" items as horses from Australia or billiard tables from Great Britain.

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[32] Simmonds, E.H.S. "Some Aspect of Narrative Prose Fiction in Thai" in *Sektsiya XV Yuzo-Vostochnaya Azuya*, p. 338.

[33] Simmonds, "Some Aspects...", p. 343.

The King warned about imitating the West, but then developed a program for nationalism based on Western practices. His behavior prompted many to believe he practiced a double standard, one set of rules for him, one set for the rest of the nation. In such a situation, a reservoir of public sympathy would have been indispensable in overcoming the stigma of these apparent inconsistencies. However, because of Wachirawut's overbearing manner, he alienated many people who otherwise would, at least out of force of habit, have supported him.

And whenever opposition appeared, the King sought to squash it by intensifying his call for loyalty to the nation and the king. By so closely associating the monarchy with nationalism and by maintaining a monopoly on the leadership of the movement, Wachirawut undermined his program. Unlike the later leaders of nationalism in Asia and Africa, Wachirawut and his state were viewed as one and the same thing. His concept of nationalism became suspect because it was the King, himself, who was so ardently preaching loyalty to the monarchy.

The King's domineering manner reflected his own lack of appreciation of the limits of power. He seemed unconcerned that many people thought it unseemly for him to act in his own theatrical productions. He brushed aside suggestions that a king should not participate in public debates in the local press.[34] Having grown up in the post-1892 period when his father had already harnessed the administration, he took his power for granted. He seemed to forget that his father had struggled for 20 years to attain it and that it was only tenuously held by the monarch. Wachirawut expected his administrative leadership to remain constant even though he repeatedly failed to to exercise it. And he thought it sufficient to proclaim himself intellectual leader of the nation and consequently by recognized as such.

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[34] Sunthonphiphit, Phraya, "Suan Anuson," pp. 232-233

By using the mass media as his arena of expression, Wachirawut traded kingly dignity for a wider appeal. It was an uneven exchange; the more people met him in print, the more they lowered their estimation of his person. As a distant, absolute monarch, Wachirawut could have commanded a respectful following who, while ignorant of the subtelties of his thoughts, would have been appreciative of his demeanor. But once the King stepped into the pages of the press and onto the public stage, the focus of the nation shifted from the haze of ascribed, half-magical notions of an absolute monarch to the glare of a sharp-tongued, lime-lit media figure.

At the end of his reign, Wachchirawut, aware that his program of nationalism had failed, remained true to form and shared his disappointment with the public. He wrote and produced a curious play which reflected his frustrations. The central character was a thinly disguised re-creation of himself. Unlike earlier works, he was no longer the exemplary figure of Phra Ruang but rather a harried, distraught individual confronted on all sides by self-seeking ministers of state. Hearing about a planned coup d'etat, the king in the play joins the plotters so he can convince them of the noble intentions of the monarch. In the climactic scene, he explains the royal dilemma:

> *Whatever has been initiated or accomplished by the king with good results the politicians who are ministers and their parasites have appropriated the credit. Should any of their acts go wrong and they are to blame, the ministers and their parasites shrug their shoulders and say what can we do, when the king chooses to listen to syncophants. The sovereign . . . is not a selfish man. His desires have always been to govern his people so that they should obtain as much happiness as possible. But, alas, gentlemen! The policies and ideals of the king are like frail craft launched upon a troubled sea full of rocks, so that some are driven ashore, some are damaged., and some are wrecked, begin unable to get through. A great pity, is it not gentlemen? But no one one could have keener regrets on that account than the king himself.*[35]

Wachirawut died in 1945 at the age of 45. Perhaps had he lived a longer life his remarkable intelligence and creative ability would have enabled him achieve better results. But such thoughts belong to the realm of speculation. Wachirawut remains an enigmatic historical character: modern by education, but traditional by temperment; a perceptive writer, but an ineffective politician and a proponent of unity, but a source of conflict.

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[35] Si Ayudhaya (pseud. for Wachirawut) "Coup d'etat" in *Wachirawut Thanuson*, 2502 (1959).

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PORTRAYAL OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE NEWSPAPERS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Notes:

1. The data for this study were gathered from August 1988 to July 1989, while the author was serving as a foreign expert in the Chinese Department of Liaoning University, Shenyang, People's Republic of China. He wishes to thank Mr. Wang Tiezhu, a teacher in the Service Foreign Language Department of Liaoning University, for gathering the data from the three Chinese language newspapers; and Ms. Ma Yue, an English teacher in the Foreign Language Department, for taking part in the coder reliability check for those three papers. Without their assistance, this study would not have been possible.

2. The original research design called for compiling questions based on statistical analysis of the data. Appointments were made at which the editors of the newspapers in the sample were to respond to these questions, providing both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. Because of the events during the end of May and the first of June, however, most of these editors are either dead, imprisoned, or no longer in their positions. In an effort to make the study as useful as possible, given the situation, People were contacted who, although not as capable of addressing the questions as the editors might have been, were certainly able to provide credible information to enhance the findings. The author thanks those people for their timely assistance.

Introduction:

In 1964, Oliphant said, "The relationship between the United States and Red China has tremendous implications for the entire world, and the way in way these two countries see each other may largely determine what this relationship will be."[1] Implicit in the fact that we now refer to "Red China" as the People's Republic of China, is indication of much change in the relationship between our nations, but the truth of his statement is unchanged.

Research on how the United States is portrayed in the Chinese media from tne Chinese civil war era until the mid 1980s seems to indicate three distinct periods. From the civil war until the 1960s, the U.S. was seen as the archenemy. From the 1960s until normalization in 1979, the U.S. was considered, with the Soviet Union, a superpower seeking controlling influence on its "fair" portion of the world. After 1979, however, the U.S. has been portrayed with generally increasing frequency as allied with China, both politically and economically.

Anderson's research shows that Chinese newspapers during the civil war era in China revealed the increasing opposition in China to U.S. policies. She found that as U.S. policies decreased in popularity, they were attacked by both the Communists and the Nationalists.[2]

In his 1960 study of Reference News, Schwartz found that the United was portrayed as "a weakening, warmongering and exploiting nation."[3]

Edelstein and Liu, in a 1962 study of the People's Daily, found strong anti-American propaganda common.[4]

In a 1963 study of Peking Review, Oliphant found that the editors of the weekly publication make use of "distortions, half truths, misrepresentations, outright falsehoods, and quotations out of context." The picture of the U.S. portrayed by Peking Review in this study was of a crime-ridden, meddler in the affairs of others, waning in prestige and economic strength.[5]

Eight years later, Tretiak reported that China's verbal hostility toward the United States had been softening since 1968.[6]

Wang and Stark, studying the external propaganda of Xinhua News Agency's international edition during the first five months of 1971, found "a general and overall decline...in the intensity of the hostility of Chinese propaganda toward the United States. They reported that the decline was not linear, however, and attributed the fluctuations to a "twofold purpose of Chinese propaganda during this period: to promote reconciliation with the United States but at the same time to reaffirm...anti-imperialism ideology." They predicted that "as long as the thaw continues between Communist China and the United States, the hostility of Communist Chinese propaganda toward the United States will continue to decline."[7]

Liu's 1973 study of People's Daily, however, found 77 percent of the news about the United States dealt with "imperialism," and ten percent of the references to the U.S. showed the country in a social and/or economic crisis.[8]

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, China has claimed to be making efforts to use journalism to enhance communication with other countries. That concept was supported by the director of Xinhua, the official news agency, in 1982, when he said his agency "works to promote understanding between the Chinese people and the people of the world."[9]

Atwood and Lin analyzed 11 issues of Xinhua News Agency's Reference News in 1979. Unlike Schwartz's 1960 study, theirs found the U.S. portrayed favorably; especially when compared to the Soviet Union. The only negative stories were about the energy crisis and government bureaucracy. They found 1) the U.S. portrayed twice as often as any other country, 2) U.S. foreign policy reported in conflict with that of the Soviet Union, 3) the U.S. assisting China in modernization efforts, and 4) half of all science stories about developments in the U.S. They concluded from their study that material in Reference News was selected to support Chinese political policy, and that, "Images of countries change, or remain stable, seemingly in conformity with diplomatic relations."[10]

In his 1979-80 study of the People's Daily, Lee found, "The proportion of news characterizing the U.S. as beset by a series of domestic social and economic crises was roughly ten percent...." He found, however, substantial admiration for U.S. science and technology, and attributed this seeming dichotomy to China's "internal paradox": "a need for rapid economic modernization on the one hand and a likelihood of political turmoil stemming from rising expectations and frustrations on the other." According to Lee, "China's media [are] closely related to the grand ideology and political 'lines' rather than objective reality." His analysis, then, was that the media were being used to remind the Chinese "that the U.S., despite its high productivity, is troubled by the forces arising from the unequal relationship of production inherent in a capitalist system."[11]

Chu and Chu said that newspapers in the early 1980s were "much livelier" than during the Cultural Revolution, and that they carried more critical letters and news reports.[12]

In a 1980 trip to the People's Republic of China, Robinson found that international news in the Chinese media stressed conflict and competition, that only contending forces were portrayed, and that the overall impression conveyed was that "the world is an unstable place full of conflict and uncertainty." She found that when the media addressed relationships between China and the rest of the world, however, that they "encouraged Chinese people to look upon people in other countries as friends." She saw this as an effort to "help smooth the way for joint ventures and Western multinational enterprises.[13]

In a 1980 study of People's Daily and Southern Daily, Ip and Wong found foreign relations the most frequent topic, followed by economic concerns. They found almost all of the items about the U.S. were favorable in both papers, but a tendency for the critical items to be somewhat longer.[14]

Kang and Shelby analyzed 5,000 news items from 23 media outlets during the period 1979 to 1984, and found that the Chinese media closely reflected official policy toward the United States during the six-year period. Their data showed the media portrayed the U.S. as a friendly nation ready to help with China's modernization from 1979-81. Media treatment of the U.S. deteriorated from 1982-83, when the U.S. sold arms to Taiwan and granted asylum to Chinese tennis star Hu Na. Renewed relations during 1984 were reflected in warmer treatment in the media. Their data showed that even during the coolest media treatment, however, portrayal of the U.S. was never more than 20 percent negative, a situation the authors said reflected "China's pragmatic attitude toward contact with the United States in modernizing their nation."[15]

In 1983, however, the People's Daily relayed a warning from Hu Yaobang, general secretary of the Communist Party, that, "Reports in our press about the capitalist world....definitely should not paint too rosy a picture or publish so-called purely objective reports."[16] Four years later, Hu was dismissed from his post for failing to crack down on students who were demonstrating in part for press freedom. At that time, a Media and Publications Office was established under the State Council to give the government firmer control of the press.

Li found that in 1986 the People's Daily devoted a significantly greater number of stories, and significantly more space, to items about the United States than did the Washington Post about the People's Republic of China. He also found that the vast majority of items about the U.S. in the People's Daily were neutral.[17]

Johnson spent a year as an editor for Xinhua News Agency in 1986-87. She found that "little factual information is readily available in China....'truth' is something that is invented and reinvented by the party-run government." She found that although many of the reporters for Xinhua "were testing the waters of independent thinking...slogans too often substitute for thought...even in the Xinhua newsroom." Some of these slogans, such as, "Western culture will bring in drugs and AIDS," directly reflected the views some held of the United States.[18]

In addition to questions of how media content in China interacts with official policy and how that affects the way Chinese see the United States, research has been conducted on what proportion of news in China is international, and why.

In their discussion of press reform in China, Stark and Xu point out the importance of the fact that, "China...has aggressively pursued economic development in the international arena." They question whether "less emphasis should be put on a nation's domestic environment and more emphasis on the external environment."[19]

In a study of Chinese Central Television evening news programs, Warren found that international stories tended to be clustered at the end of the broadcast, and were significantly shorter than domestic stories, and that the United States was the most common dateline. His data showed that Third World countries were presented more favorably than developed countries.[20]

When Rogers, et al, surveyed media audiences in Beijing, they found that people cited newspapers as their most frequent source of news, and that they preferred world news from a list of 17 types of newspaper content.

Among suggested improvements by readers were more timely coverage of international news, and more coverage of Western countries.[21]

A question that has been answered differently in various research is how much of the content of Chinese newspapers comes from Xinhua News Agency, either directly or through the People's Daily.

Li's data showed that the People's Daily was heavily dependent on Xinhua for stories; only 21.5 percent of items were furnished by the staff of the paper.[22]

In the Ip and Wong study, 75 percent of the items about the U.S. in the People's Daily, and 54 percent of those in the Southern Daily were from Xinhua News Agency. They saw this fact as significant because Xinhua, which they said provides much of what the Chinese know about the United States, tends to concentrate on official U.S. government policies and U.S.-Chinese relations, to the virtual exclusion of stories about the lives of people in the U.S.[23]

Chu said the Chinese media are not only expected to be critical, but are required by the government to engage in criticism of institutions. He also said that press freedom has never really existed in the People's Republic of China, and that other media have usually had to repeat--during some historic periods, word-for-word--the People's Daily.[24]

Mills said, "It has generally been assumed that the media in communist states was centralized and that media commentary was related to regime attitude." This assumption was voiced by several Chinese colleagues during the current study. In fact, they questioned the need to analyze any paper but the People's Daily, saying that the others would mirror its content. Mills, however, questioned the validity of such an assumption in a 1979-80 study of several Chinese papers, including People's Daily and Beijing Daily. What he found was that 1) "Xinhua releases [were sometimes] ignored by the regional press, even if they [were] printed in the People's Daily," 2) "local stories [were sometimes] written by local reporters," and 3) the impact of Xinhua stories was modified in several ways, including placement of the articles in the papers. He concluded that as virtually all articles on foreign policy in the Chinese press come from Xinhua, regional editors not only managed to express differing opinions, they did so using the same articles."[25]

This study was conducted to determine how the United States is portrayed in Chinese newspapers, including number and length of stories; whether they were about or just mentioned the U.S.; where in the newspaper they appeared; whether they were from an agency or written by staff; the most frequent topics; and whether they were negative, positive, or neutral in tone.

Methodology:

This study analyzes the articles with U.S. content from every eighth issue of China Daily, People's Daily, Beijing Daily, and Shenyang Daily during 1988. These papers were chosen as 1) the only nationally distributed daily newspaper in English; 2) the most widely distributed national daily newspaper; 3) the daily newspaper of the nation's capital; and 4) the largest provincial daily newspaper in the northeast region of China, a region somewhat isolated from the most developed core of the country, but still a vital area to their rapid economic and social development. Because two of the papers did not publish on January first, the issue for January second was substituted for all four papers.

Included in gathering the data were 1) editorials, and 2) letters to the editor. Not included were 1) photograph cutlines; 2) maps; 3) charts; 4) advertisements; and 5) weather, stock and money exchange listings. Originally, sports "roundup" stories and listings of sports scores were included, but because only *China Daily* included these items, and because they comprised such a large proportion of the stories about or mentioning the U.S. in *China Daily* (236, or 34%), their inclusion skewed the findings, so they were eliminated from treatment of the data.

On Sundays, *China Daily* published a "Business Weekly" in place of their general interest paper. Because they were the only paper distributed by *China Daily* on those days, when they fell into the sample, they were used, but all special supplements were omitted.

Data collected included 1) the date; 2) the paper in which the article appeared; 3) whether the article was about, or only mentioned, the United States; 4) whether the article was from a news agency, or was written by a reporter; 5) the length of the article; 6) where the article appeared in the paper; 7) the topic of the article; and 8) whether the article was negative, positive, or neutral in tone.

In determining whether the article included information about the United States, any article that contained the words "America," "American," "U.S.," or "United States" was included. If an article contained only a mention of a place in the United States, or a person from the United States, it was not included. For example, an article about discussions at the United Nations would not have been included just because the UN meets in New York; only if the discussions were reported as concerning the United States. An article about Michael Jackson appearing in concert in Beijing, would not have been used unless he was identified in the article as an American.

An article was coded as being "about" the United States if some person or institution identified specifically with the United States was a primary actor in the story, and most of the story was directly concerned with the actions of that person or institution. It was coded as "mentioning" the United States if only a mention was given in the story, or if some person or institution was a minor actor in the story, and most of the story focused on some other subject.

An article was coded as being from a news agency unless it was bylined, appeared on the editorial page and clearly reflected the opinion of an individual or a concensus of the editorial staff, or was a letter to the editor.

The length of the article was recorded in 1/2 centimeter increments. For the data analysis, length was used either in these increments; or in 64 categories delineated as one centimeter increments up to 63, and "more than 63 centimeters," depending on the statistical analysis being used.

The position of the article was coded as "front page" or "inside pages." Although China Daily delineated other sections, such as "sports" and "business," and People's Daily had "politics and law," and "international" sections, neither of the other papers delineated sections, making it necessary to limit coding to these two categories. If the article was continued on another page, the position was assigned according to the page on which the article began.

Coding the tone of the article as "negative," "positive," or "neutral" was done based on the language used in the entire article if it was about the United States, or on only the language in the paragraphs that mentioned the United States. It was not uncommon, therefore, for an article that might have an overall negative tone to be coded as "positive" or "neutral," as the intent was to determine the tone only of that content concerning the United States.

Although every effort was made to reach concensus about what language constituted "negative" or "positive" treatment, and although if there was any doubt, coders were instructed to code the article as "neutral," clearly such determinations are to some degree subjective. A coder reliability check was, therefore, conducted, in which people not connected with the research were instructed on the criteria used. These people then coded the tone of the articles from every tenth issue surveyed. This check yielded a 96 percent intercoder reliability if only disagreement between positive and negative were considered. Because of their instructions to code as neutral when not sure, the coders more often disagreed between positive and neutral, or negative and neutral. with these disparities considered, the intercoder reliability was 74 percent.

Results:

Every eighth issue of the four newspapers yielded a sample of 184 papers with 772 articles. Three hundred eighty eight of the articles (50%) were in China Daily, 232 (30%) in People's Daily, 84 (11%) in Beijing Daily, and 68 (9%) in Shenyang Daily (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Four hundred twenty one (55%) of the articles were about the United States, and 351 (45%) mentioned the United States. In China Daily 195 (50%) were about and 193 (50%) mentioned the U.S., in People's Daily 171 (74%) were about and 61 (26%) mentioned the U.S., in Beijing Daily 30 (36%) were about and 54 (64%) mentioned the U.S., and in Shenyang Daily 25 (37%) were about and 43 (63%) mentioned the U.S.

Four hundred ninety (63%) of the articles were from agencies; 282 (37%) were written by staff. China Daily had 306 (79%) from agencies and 82 (21%) by staff, People's Daily had 130 (56%) from agencies and 102 (44%) by staff, Beijing Daily had 34 (40%) from agencies and 50 (60%) by staff, and Shenyang Daily had 20 (29%) from agencies and 48 (71%) by staff.

One hundred twenty two of the articles (16%) were on the front page, and 650 (84%) were on the inside pages. China Daily had 89 (23%) on the front page and 299 (77%) inside, People's Daily had 8 (3%) on the front page and

224 (97%) inside, *Beijing Daily* had 12 (14%) on the front page and 72 (86%) inside, and *Shenyang Daily* had 13 (19%) on the front page and 55 (81%) inside.

Two hundred six (27%) of the articles were negative, 250 (32%) were positive, and 316 (41%) were neutral (see Figure 2). In *China Daily* 121 (31%) were negative, 137 (35%) were positive, and 130 (34%) were neutral; in *People's Daily* 60 (26%) were negative, 68 (29%) were positive, and 104 (45%) were neutral; in *Beijing Daily* 21 (25%) were negative, 23 (27%) were positive, and 40 (48%) were neutral; and in *Shenyang Daily* 4 (6%) were negative, 22 (32%) were positive, and 42 (62%) were neutral.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Length of the articles ranged from one to 85 cm, with the mode at 4 cm (4%). Twenty eight percent were 10 cm or less; 11 percent were 30 cm or more (see Figure 3). The longest were on medicine, China development, technology, academics, and Central America. In *China Daily* articles ranged from two to 85 cm, with the mode at 4 cm (6%). Thirty two percent were 10 cm or less; 19 percent were 30 cm or more. The longest were on medicine, China development, technology, academics, and tourism. In *People's Daily* articles ranged from one to 68 cm, with the mode at 2 cm (7%). Fifty nine percent were 10 cm or less; five percent were 30 cm or more. The longest were on Central America, The European Economic Community, culture, arms control, and U.S. relations. In *Beijing Daily* articles ranged from one to 36.5 cm, with the mode at 2 cm (10%). Sixty nine percent were 10 cm or less; four percent were 30 cm or more. The longest were on China development, crime, smoking, and the Middle East. In *Shenyang Daily* articles ranged from 1.5 to 38 cm, with the mode at 3.5 cm (7%). Fifty four percent were 10 cm or less; eight percent were 30 cm or more. The longest were on China development, technology, science, and U.S. relations.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Seven topics accounted for 50 percent of the topics portrayed in the sample. They were: U.S. relations, 83 times (*China Daily* 31, *People's Daily* 37, *Beijing Daily* 10, and *Shenyang Daily* 5); China development, 82 times (*China Daily* 48, *People's Daily* 8, *Beijing Daily* 11, and *Shenyang Daily* 15); U.S. business 64 times (*China Daily* 17, *People's Daily* 38, *Beijing Daily* 5, and *Shenyang Daily* 5); Middle East, 54 times (*China Daily* 23, *People's Daily* 23, *Beijing Daily* 8, and *Shenyang Daily* 0); arms control, 33 times (*China Daily* 14, *People's Daily* 12, *Beijing Daily* 5, and *Shenyang Daily* 2); culture, 33 times (*China Daily* 6, *People's Daily* 9, *Beijing Daily* 14, and *Shenyang Daily* 4); and sports, 33 times (*China Daily* 10, *People's Daily* 6, *Beijing Daily* 7, and *Shenyang Daily* 10). For a more complete analysis of the topics of the articles, see Figure 4.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Discussion:

It came as no surprise that China Daily had the most articles portraying the United States; as well as the longest, the highest percentage of long, and the lowest percentage of short articles. These facts are probably accounted for because it is the only widely circulated Chinese daily that is printed in English, so is read by many of the thousands of Americans in China. It also has the widest foreign circulation, much of it in the United States. As such, it is likely that a higher percentage of its readers have a more direct interest in news of the United States.

This concept is supported by the fact that about one third of the articles in China Daily that portray the U. S. are about sports--many on football, baseball, basketball, and golf--which are of limited interest to people from countries other than the United States.

Sherry L. Wright, a reporter for the Manhattan (Kansas) Mercury who was a copy editor for China Daily in 1988-89, also said that many of the staff are educated in the U.S., so have an inherent interest that is reflected in longer articles.[26]

People's Daily, as the official voice of the government, had the second most articles portraying the U.S., as well as the second longest; understandable, given government concern with the U.S. as a superpower, and as their best hope for continued economic development. Their role probably requires them to include a certain amount of analysis, therefore the need for longer stories.

The fact that Beijing Daily had the third most articles portraying the U.S., but that they were the shortest, fits its role as the daily paper of the capitol city; keeping readers informed about the U.S., but in a more cursory manner. Also, as the capitol city paper, Beijing Daily must carry more national news. With only 4-8 pages, it isn't possible for them to allot much space to stories about the U.S.

As a provincial newspaper, Shenyang Daily isn't expected to offer as much international news, but to carry only that of most direct impact on the region. Therefore, it had the fewest articles portraying the U.S. The fact that it had the second highest percentage of long articles probably is a function of the fact that more were staff-written, and that when it does carry a story affecting provincial activity, it is expected to offer some analysis.

Of the articles portraying the United States in People's Daily, 3/4 were about, rather than just mentioning the U.S. A fact Li Wen, a founding member of China Daily; currently a senior editor for that paper on leave in the United States, attributed to People's Daily's having special correspondents posted in the United States.[27] This is also consistent with its need, as official voice of the government, to present more analytical pieces.

Of the stories portraying the U.S. in China Daily, 1/2 were about, and one half mentioned; consistent with its role as discussed. Thus, the editors maximize their eight pages; giving only a mention in the less important stories, and reserving additional space for the more important ones.

Both *Beijing Daily* and *Shenyang Daily* carried only 1/3 about the U.S., consistent with their roles, giving their readers more depth only on those topics directly affecting them.

The limited use of agency stories in *Shenyang Daily* is likely a result of the fact that wire services are simply less accessable. Xinhua is located in Beijing, with runners frequently carrying material to *China Daily*, *Beijing Daily*, and *People's Daily*.[28]

The preponderance of agency stories in *China Daily* results from the fact that, in addition to having Xinhua acessable, it has no foreign correspondents, so to meet its need for stories in English, is more likely to use material from the U.S. and British wire services.[29] This concept is supported by the fact that many of the stories in *China Daily* were datelined "agencies via Xinhua."

The reason *People's Daily* had 56 percent agency material, compared to 40 percent in *Beijing Daily* is probably that, as Xinhua is considered a source of official material, direct from the government, *People's Daily*, as the government's voice to the people, often finds its material quite appropriate.

Although there are many differences between Chinese and Western newspapers, there are also numerous similarities. One element that is the same is that Chinese editors generally reserve their front pages for those stories to which they want to call attention. It is in the content of their front pages, then, that these papers give clear indication of their primary roles.

Almost one forth of the stories portraying the United States in China Daily were on the front page, compared to only 3 percent in People's Daily. This fact, again, reflects the respective roles of these papers--China Daily to inform foreigners about China and Chinese about foreigners, with news of the United States critical; and People's Daily to inform Chinese about their government's stance on issues, chiefly domestic.[30]

Previous research has indicated a tendency for the Chinese media to portray the United States more or less positively, depending on the tenor of relations between the countries at the time. The Chinese government, in the past two years, has encouraged friendly relations with the United States; especially in economic matters, while maintaining a somewhat cooler attitude toward U.S. foreign relations and domestic governance.

It is not surprising, then, that all three papers were 30-35 percent positive in their portrayal of the United States. The fact that China Daily carried about 1/3 negative stories, compared to about 1/4 in People's Daily and Beijing Daily, is probably a result of the distribution of topics. A higher proportion of the topics in the Beijing papers--especially China Daily--dealt with the international and domestic politics of the United States, topics more likely to meet with disagreement from the Chinese government. The most frequent topics in Shenyang Daily were China development and sports; probably the least likely to meet with disagreement.

Wright said, "The people--and the paper--of Shenyang are simply not as immersed in political issues as are the people and papers of Beijing. I think the higher frequency of negative articles about the United States in China Daily, People's Daily, and Beijing Daily reflects the negativity about the United States' stand on specific topics not often dealt with in Shenyang Daily, rather than negativity about the United States itself.[31]

Summary:

This study supports previous research indicating that the Chinese media reflect government attitudes about the United States, with the additional indication that newspapers have become more diverse in their roles. The data reveal that not all the papers, by any means, repeat the line espoused by Xinhua or People's Daily. Rather, editors seem quite aware of their respective audiences, and of their objectives in serving those audiences.

One way their differing roles are reflected is in the quantity and topics of international news they carry, and in the placement and degree of analysis alloted it. This study seemed to indicate a strong interest in the United States, and a generally favorable attitude, but not without exception.

"Official" China does not care for American cultural, social, and political ideas, but does want to emulate certain aspects of the American economic system.[32] Chinese newspapers, therefore, present sometimes conflicting images of the United States. As official institutions of the government, they must not convey too avidly the democratic, capitalist system condemned by the government as exploitative. On the other hand, they are expected to enhance government efforts to court outside capital so vital to China's economic well-being.

In the process of trying to make these disparate ends meet, Chinese journalists are attempting to function as credible professionals. During a 1987 study tour of the Chinese media, I was often struck by how seriously they took their professional organizations and by how sincere they were in their efforts to improve their products.

Charles E. Frankel, adjunct lecturer in journalism at the University of Hawaii and copy editor at China Daily in 1988-89, said, "Of course there were many political judgements in news selection [but] in my year at China Daily I never heard an editor say, 'Gee, we need a negative story about the U.S. to fulfill our production quota.' These were professional editors, interested in presenting news--negative, positive, or neutral.[33]

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Figure 1

Distribution of Articles by Paper

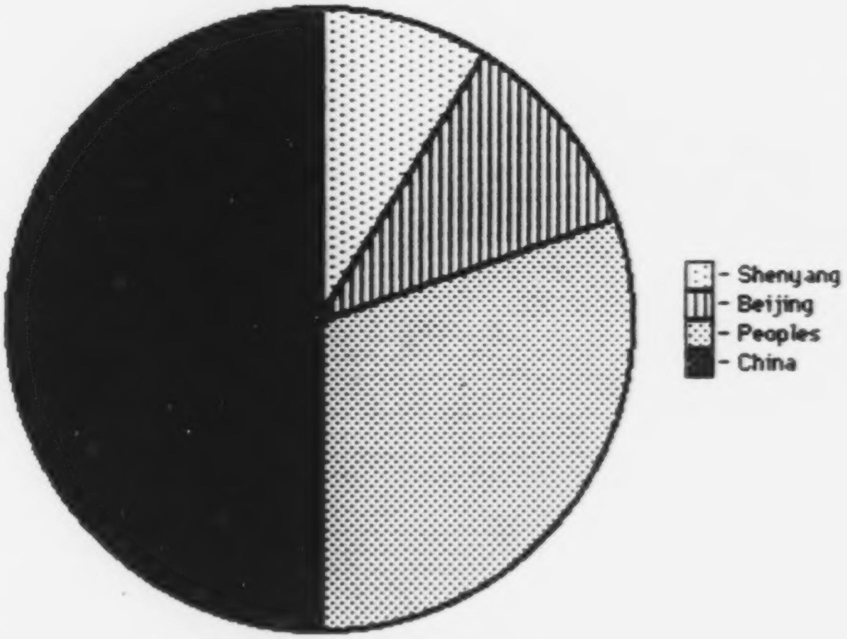


Figure 2

Frequency of Negative, Positive, and Neutral Articles

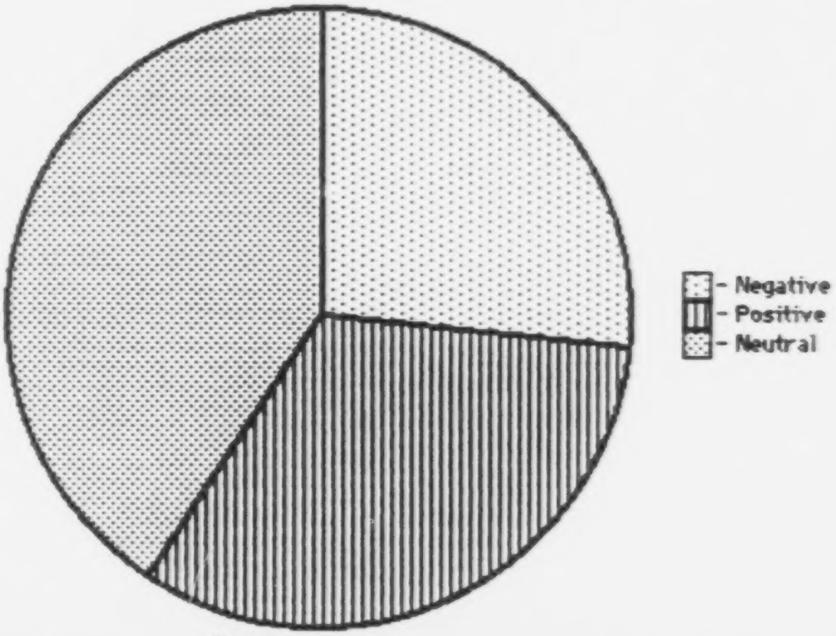


Figure 3

Length of Articles

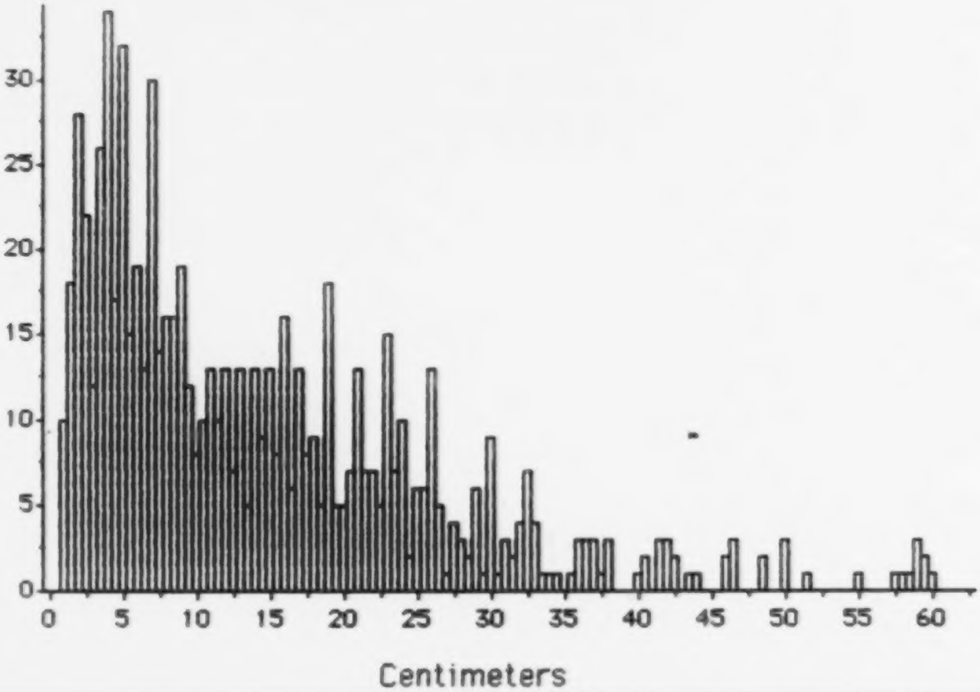
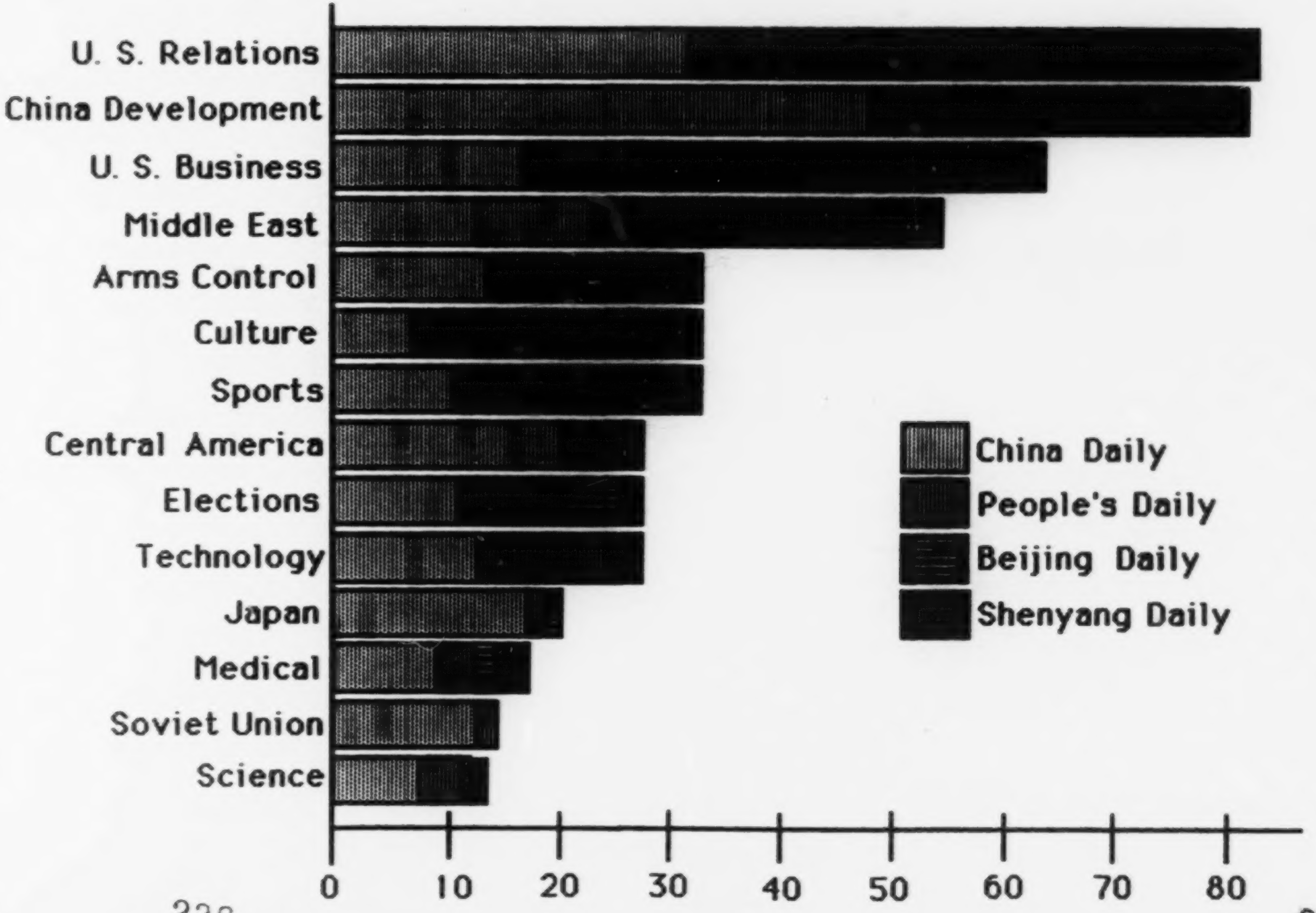


Figure 4

Topics of Articles



A Comparative Study of
Communication & Social Integration in Development

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A Comparative Study of

Communication and Social Integration in Development

Abstract

Through a two-decades analysis of the newspapers of four British colonies, Nigeria, Guyana, Singapore and Hong Kong, the study found a systemic indifference to the socially disruptive class and ethnic issues in the newspapers. The media may play an "integrative" role in a much more subtle way by not reporting certain issues, thereby shutting out the readers' awareness of the disruptive impacts, and cultivating a non-controversial symbolic environment for people to live and interact.

A Comparative Study of Communication and Social Integration in Development

Introduction

In the past few decades, people in most of the developing countries faced rapid and abrupt changes. The developing countries tried to quicken their paces to catch up with the Western industrial societies. In this phase, confusion and chaos were common. The disorder in the process of catching up with the West was aggravated by the colonial legacy of a heterogeneous population who were grouped together arbitrarily by the colonial powers in the past century. The developing countries need not only change, but integration of the diverse elements of their societies as well. To strike a balance between integration and change is a thorny problem in the developing countries today.

The present study aims at examining the integrative role of communication in development through an examination of the major newspapers of four developing societies.

The Integrative and Transformative Role of Communication

A review of literature shows that the theories about the integrative or disintegrative role of communication are still inconclusive as little empirical research has been done. Two extremely opposing views coexist. At one end is the view that communication is positive in integration and change. At the other is the view that communication plays a disintegrative and retarding role.

The Benign View

As early as 1909, Cooley wrote that modern communications were the foundation of modern life, making possible the cultivation of a sense of community. He discussed the integrative role of communication in terms of "enlargement and animation". He believed that the press could animate millions in the emulation of common models.[1] Deutsch holds the view that communication is essential to political development which he conceives as a process of integration and social cohesion. He postulates that the ability to communicate widely and effectively on non-traditional topics may be relevant for the cohesion and learning capacity of peoples and political systems in countries undergoing rapid industrialization.[2] Similarly, Pye argues that the problem of political development is one of cultural diffusion, and of adapting and adjusting old patterns of life to new demands. The adjustment of old patterns to new demands will be determined by the flow of communication which is the web of society.[3] Fagen stipulates that communication serves two roles in integration. First, it is to transform the segmented society into a national society with all of the interdependence, division of labor and specialization that the latter implies. Second, communication is to create institutions and a political style which can bridge the gulf between the national elites and all the others who at least nominally are members of the same polity.[4]

Perhaps Schramm is the author who has expressed most eloquently the integrative role of modern communication:[5]

> A modernizing of society requires mass media, some of which must be national. The radio and a few newspapers must carry the news and viewpoint of the nation, and they must come into the village. When they do so, people will learn to read the print and acquire receivers for the radio. And when this happens, the local communication systems - the coffee house, the bazaar, the causal conversation, the local government, the local newspaper if there is one - will also concern themselves with national matters, and if there is adequate leadership the sense of nation-ness will grow.

In his view, only with adequate leadership will mass media contribute to national integration. Schramm therefore thinks that mass media must communicate widely to the entire country the agreed-upon goals, national decisions and reports of the progress. An efficient national effort is impossible without modern communication.[6]

However, Schramm does not ignore the importance of two-way communication. He stresses that in order to maintain a sense of nation-ness, a sense of participating, there must be a channel by which the needs and concerns and achievements of a local community can be communicated upward and outward.[7] Parker & Mohammadi hold a similar view. They think that the goal of national cohesion is synonymous with the goal of creating a communication system through which people in every segment of the society have bi-directional communication with other people in the society.[8]

The Malignant and Limited View

Yet not all the authors in this field hold a positive view of communication in integration and agree to the powerful effect of mass communication in change. Angell points out that communication alone is not sufficient to achieve social integration. Units in the same communicative net that understand each other very well do not always cooperate. He comments that Deutsch's idea of communicative integration is only the capacity of acting together, not the actuality. Although if Deutsch's concepts of assimilation and mobilization are accepted as defining communicative integration, the immediate causes of high degrees of integration are fairly obvious - a common and rich set of symbols and access by all to the mass media - the conditions under which these immediate causes are produced have not been adequately studied.[9]

Many authors further point out that in the case of a heterogeneous society, the role of communication in integration is rather limited. It has been argued that only in a relatively egalitarian society can a genuine bi-directional communication system exist and genuine integration achieved. Donohue & his colleagues have found that the increase in the provision of information through communication campaigns often results in widening the gap between the "information rich" and "information poor". It is because the structural arrangements are so organized that the "information haves" benefit more than the "have-nots" from information campaigns.[10]

Hedebro points out a structural imbalance of media facilities between the urban and rural areas. Most media in the developing countries are concentrated in the urban areas, where the educated live, where the highest number of literates is found and where the money is. The rural areas usually have a much poorer mass media structure.[11] As most of the people in the developing countries live in rural areas, development must involve an incorporation of the rural masses into the polity and the communication setup has to be made relevant not only to the urban groups but also to the rural workers and farmers. Under a structural imbalance of media facilities, communication can hardly be expected to perform an integrative role.

These authors point to the socio-economic distances and rural-urban dualism of developing societies as the obstacles to integration via communication. Sultana Krippendorff further criticizes the communication approach for its assumption of social homogeneity. He argues that one is never a villager or urban resident in a developing society where contending tribes or religious communities are engaged in a political struggle.[12] In a discussion on communication and development in India, Weiner raises the question whether the Indians will utilize their freedom to communicate merely to strengthen the solidarity of each lager and segment of society. He questions the integrative role of communication in a heterogeneous society like India.[13] Krippendorff points out that the popular press in Europe was instrumental in standardizing religious and political dogma, and in creating a sense of "nation-ness" within an England, a France, an Italy, but not across their borders. He indeed argues that at the boundaries of these social units, popular communication was more effective in fanning hatreds, amplifying controversies and hardening stances. Krippendorff says:[14]

> Yes, the media do enhance empathy, but in a socially heterogeneous context, that enhanced empathy is equally likely to flow too intermediate structure of tribe or religious group as to the "nation" ... the mass media .... appear to be more successful in creating uniformities within than across group boundaries (his emphasis).

In his discussion on communication and development, Boyd-Barrett also thinks that the premise of an important role of communication in integration and hence to development requires considerable modification. He reasons that modernization sets generation against generation, old elites against new; it may itself be associated with the newly achieved dominance of a particular tribe or social grouping and in this way became an anti-integrative symbol against which the disadvantaged, the minority tribes and the dispossessed may be mobilized. The use of mass media for modernization is fundamentally divisive and may cancel out any impact attributable to integrative goals.[15]

In short, the critics of the view that communication plays an integrative role point to some conditions under which communication is not integrative. These conditions are when the society is divided between rich and poor, urban and rural, and when it is highly heterogeneous in languages, ethnicities, religions, etc. There is also a view that if communication is used for development, change in some existing social arrangements is needed. It may consequently alienate parts of the society and cause disintegration. In such a view, there is an inherent contradiction between the use of communication for development and the use of communication for integration.

Based on the above discussion, we want to examine the hypothesis that mass communication contributes to social integration.

Methodology

It is reasoned that if mass media have an important role to play in social integration, we should expect to see a lot of integrative messages in the mass media because they can exert their influence most directly through their content. In addition, if we can find some societies which have been more integrated and some less so, and compare them validly, we should be able to see more integrative messages in the media of the more integrated societies than the less integrated ones, if media do play an integrative role.

Therefore we did a content analysis of the major newspapers of four societies, some of which are more integrated than the other. If we found a lot of integrative messages in the media, we would then be more certain of media's integrative role; they at least attempt to play such a role no matter whether they are successful or not. Second, if we could find that the media of integrated societies have contained more integrative messages than those of the less integrated one, we could have greater confidence in claiming a positive role for the media in integration, although such a claim need not be conclusive.

Since the major concern of this study is mass communication and social integration, the institutions pertaining to mass communication and integrative activities are very important. We have observed that many developing countries have borrowed or inherited their bureaucracy, social organization and economic institutions from one developed nation or another. Moreover, the developing countries' cultural institutions and media structures were also heavily influenced by their former colonial masters.

Although sometimes the colonial policy of a Western Power might be different in its different colonies, overall, the colonial policy was consistent and distinctively different from the policies of other colonial powers. For example, the French were generally more enthusiastic in assimilating their colonial subjects into French culture and reluctant to relinquish its control over its colonies, whereas the British were more used to "divide and rule", leaving indigenous culture somewhat intact, and more likely to give self-government and independence to their colonial subjects.

The colonial experiences of different developing societies must therefore be controlled in order to have a valid comparison of the media's role in integration. If we can control the colonial experiences, many extraneous factors on the relationship between media and social integration will be controlled. Nigeria, Guyana, Singapore and Hong Kong all had the colonial experience of British rule and were thus selected for comparison.

The media of the four societies we chose in this study were the Daily Times of Nigeria, Guyana Chronicle of Guyana, Straits Times of Singapore and Wah Kiu Yat Pao of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong newspaper is in Chinese while the other three are in English. The reason for choosing the Chinese newspaper is that over 99 per cent of people in Hong Kong are Chinese and the Chinese newspapers are more influential there. In Nigeria, Guyana and Singapore, English is the national medium and English newspapers are more influential.

Sampling of Newspapers

A stratified random sample was drawn from the four major newspapers of the four colonies. Except the Chinese Wah Kiu Yat Pao, all the newspapers had the largest circulation in their respective country at the time of analysis. The circulation figure is a well-kept secret in Hong Kong, we have no reliable information. The reason for choosing Wah Kiu Yat Pao for analysis was twofold. First, it was started in 1925 and is currently the oldest Chinese language daily in Hong Kong.[16] Its long history indicates that it has played a certain important part in the development of Hong Kong, since it has been accepted by the people for a long period of time. Second, up to the 1980s, the newspaper was considered the voice of Hong Kong's commerce and industry which have been the important sectors for Hong Kong's economy.

The sampling procedure was first we stratified the newspapers by every five years starting from 1960 up to 1980.

Then we picked one week of newspapers from the first half of the sampled year and one week from the second half through the random table. That means for each of the sample years i.e. 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, there were two sample weeks of newspapers; one from any of the first six months and one from any of the other six. For each newspaper, there were ten sample weeks. A total number of forty sample weeks were selected from the four newspapers. Then all the front pages, back pages and editorials of the samples were read and coded.

Coding categories

If mass communication really plays an integrative or disintegrative role, the messages contained in the communication should somehow encourage or discourage the "we feeling", trust and mutual consideration of the people. Generally, there are two major dimensions involved in the social integration of the developing countries. One is the ethnic and the other is economic. In many newly-founded nations, ethnic problem was inherited from the colonial power's arbitrary amalgamation of different races into an administrative unit. Class cleavage is another major problem. We thus derived two component variables from the variable of Social Integration. They were Ethnic Integration and Class Integration. There were altogether four coding categories tapping these two dimensions of social integration.

The first coding scheme was the message's attitude toward the upper occupational group, whether it is favorable or unfavorable along a five-item Likert scale, with the middle range as "neutral". In addition, an item of "constructively critical" was included to tap those messages conveying criticism and suggestions for improvement at the same time. The second coding scheme was the message's attitude toward the lower occupational group. The coding categories are the same as those of the first one, ranging from "very unfavorable" to "very favorable", with an additional item of "constructively critical". These two schemes were collapsed to form the variable of "Class Integration". The higher the score in the variable of Class Integration, the more integrative is the message with respect to class. Similarly, we had two separate coding schemes tapping the message's attitude towards the ethnic majority and ethnic minority groups in each of the four societies and combined them to form the variable of "Ethnic Integration". Finally, the Class Integration and Ethnic Integration variables were collapsed to form the variable "Social Integration". It should be noted that the integration variables in the content analysis referred merely to the integrative nature of the message. A finding of great amount of integrative messages in the newspapers does not mean that the newspapers play an integrative role successfully. It merely indicates that the communication has a capacity or potential to integrate.

Four coders including the author himself did the coding. Before the coding started, all the coders were thoroughly briefed with the coding categories and provided with some background knowledge of the four societies. They were instructed to make a distinction between stories which referred to the persons in the stories as individuals and which referred persons as social groupings. The former should be coded into the category of "Other" while the latter was relevant to the variable of class integration or ethnic integration. For example, when a crime story referred to a worker as an individual rather than a representative of his class, like stories on a union leader during collective bargainings, the story would be coded into the category of "Other". All coders were well-versed in both English and Chinese. To test the reliability of the coding categories, the week of May 8 to May 14, 1960 of the Daily Times was coded by all the coders. The intercoder reliability coefficients for the items tapping the variables of integration were all 0.82.

In this study, we used Nigeria as the "least-integrated" case to compare with the "most-integrated" case of Singapore and "moderately-integrated" Guyana and Hong Kong.

Three indicators are used to determine the degree of integration of the four societies. They are incidents of civil disorder, deaths from political violence and percentage of population in absolute poverty. The former two indicate social stability and the latter one shows the growth and, to some extent, the share of economic benefits among the people of the society. It is reasoned that social stability is indicative of social integration. If a society is well-integrated, social conflicts will occur less frequently and the society would be more stable. A well-integrated society should also see a better share of economic gains among its populace. Without a reasonable share of economic benefits among the people, a society would be wedged apart by class conflict.

Table 1 shows that for the period of 1948-77, incidents of civil disorders occurred most frequently in Nigeria, followed by Hong Kong, Guyana and Singapore. And the number of deaths from political violence during the period was highest in Nigeria, then Guyana, Hong Kong and Singapore. In terms of absolute poverty, Nigeria also had the largest percentage of population in absolute poverty, followed by Guyana, Hong Kong and Singapore. From these figures, we can see that Nigeria was the most unstable while Singapore was the most stable, with Guyana and Hong Kong in between. Meanwhile, Nigeria was also most seriously perplexed by poverty among the four. On the basis of these data, we deduced that social integration was not that well in Nigeria while it was much better in Singapore.

Table 1 About Here

If the hypothesis that mass communication contributes to social integration is correct, we expect to see not only many integrative messages in the media of these four societies in the past few decades, but also the greatest number in the media of Singapore, the smallest in Nigeria, and the medium amount of integrative messages in the media of Guyana and Hong Kong.

Systemic Indifference to Issues of Class and Ethnicity

Across all four newspapers, a total number of 4,491 stories, and editorials were coded among which the Daily Times of Nigeria accounted for 720 (16.0%) of the total, the Guyana Chronicle 1,231 (27.4%), Singapore's Straits Times 1,787 (39.8%) and the Wah Kiu Yat Pao of Hong Kong 753 (16.8%) of the total.

A major finding about the variable of "Integration" is that the four newspapers examined in this study carried only a very small amount of information which might encourage or discourage the integration of different classes or ethnicities. Table 2 shows that, except Nigeria's Daily Times which had 80% of messages in the category of "other" in the variable of "Attitude towards upper occupational groups", over 90% of the four newspapers' messages belong to the category of "other" in all the four variables of Class Integration and Ethnic Integration. The four newspapers seldom mentioned a particular ethnic or social group. Most of the time, when they referred to a person with a particular class or ethnic background, they referred to him or her as an individual, rather than a representative of a group.

Table 2 About Here

Such a finding casts a serious doubt on the validity of the debate on the disintegrative or integrative role of communication. If the communication does not care about class or ethnic issues and avoids reporting social class or ethnic groups, how can the media play a disintegrative or integrative role?

Before we explore this question, let us discuss some possible explanations for the small attention given to the disruptive issues of class and ethnicity first.

Explanations for the Meager Attention to Class & Ethnic Issues

Several explanations can be offered for the little attention given to the ethnic groups or social classes by the newspapers. The first explanation lies in the commercial imperative of newspapers. The commercial media's aim is to get the largest profit by appealing to most readers. To do this, it would be wiser for the media to avoid antagonizing or alienating any particular social group by eschewing any attitude which may offend any group at all. This is a plausible explanation. But it has to be noted that in the case of a government-owned paper, we may expect to see more messages, favorable or unfavorable, about different social or ethnic groups, since it has no business concern and needs not appeal to most readers. Guyana Chronicle is a paper owned by the government and is less concerned about the economic imperative of making money, however, we did not see any remarkable increase in the messages related to social or ethnic groups, favorable or unfavorable (Table 2). There must be a reason other than the "profit motive" in accounting for the meager attention to the social and ethnic issues in the media.

The second explanation is the adoption of Western journalism inherited from the British in the colonial period.

Western journalism is characterized among other things by sensationalism and objective reporting. The former makes the news media play up stories with action, conflict, tragedy and disaster and the latter makes media avoid taking stand on controversial issues. Nevertheless, the adoption of the Western tradition of objective reporting still cannot account for the apparent indifference of the newspapers to the ethnic or class issues, as the finding indicates that it is not the "neutral" category which accounts for most of the messages' nature, but the category of "other". The tradition of objective reporting could only result in more "neutral" messages while there should still be a fair amount of information about class or ethnic matters since they are real social facts in society. In fact, there seems to be a systemic indifference in the four newspapers to matters related to ethnicity and class.

The inheritance of "sensationalism" from Western journalism may explain a little more the meager attention given to ethnic and class issues. An examination of the news categories shows that "crime & judicial" stories accounted for 13.5% of the total news information contained in the front page, back page and editorials of the four newspapers. Foreign relations (12.8%), foreign politics (8.8%), domestic politics (7.5%), military & political violence (9.0%) and economics (11.1%) accounted for a total of 49.2% of the stories and editorials (Table 3). All these categories, with the exception of "economics", generally contain actions, conflicts and controversies. Nevertheless, one still wonders why ethnic strife or class conflicts are seldom reported since they also contain the elements of sensationalism and conflict. The category of "labor", which is often related to class issues, accounted for only 2% of the total number of the sampled stories in the four newspapers.

Table 3 About Here

Such an observation leads to another explanation which focuses its attention on the media institutions as a part of the social apparatuses which support the existing status quo. According to what Cohen & Young call the "Mass Manipulative model", in contrast with the "Commercial model", news is not selected according to public interests but rather delivered in a biased fashion supportive of the status quo of power and interest.[17] In a class society, the ruling elites use the media to conceal class antagonism, to illegitimate concrete social alternatives to the existing social order, and to make profit as a branch of commercial industry. The media's role is to reinforce the exploitative status quo and to legitimate the advantaged position of the ruling class. Since the class and ethnic issues may jeopardize the existing political-economic structures, the mass media, as an instrument of the ruling class, cannot be expected to sensitize these or other socially disruptive issues.[18] This could explain why government-owned papers, despite their freedom from commercial constraints, refrain from taking class and ethnic issues seriously.

Still another explanation for the meager attention given to class and ethnic issues in the newspaper is to be sought in two of the bureaucratic and ideational factors mentioned by Galtung & Ruge[19]. In deciding what is newsworthy by the journalists, these authors argues, the bureaucratic criteria make a news item more likely to be reported if its frequency is similar to that of the media. That is a daily newspaper will preferentially describe stories that occur within a period of a day - or if a news item takes longer to develop it will only report its climaxes. Since class and ethnic issues take longer than a day to develop, newspapers usually report only their "climaxes" such as racial riots or a general strike of workers. In other words, the newspaper's "periodicity" predisposes it to report daily event rather than ongoing process. Similarly, scientific breakthroughs are given attention while the process of attaining them is ignored. Pollution problems are given emphasis when they reached a certain "climax" (such as the poisoning of fish results in human deaths or a decline of export income) while the development of these problems is overlooked. It seems newspapers indeed are not apt to deal with deep-seated social issues. Apart from the bureaucratic factors, it may also have something to do with the general expectation of the newspaper readers who may prefer to read different events of the same kind (e.g. crimes, disasters) rather than the same process consisting different developments (e.g. ethnic harmony or class cleavages).

Among the ideational factor is "consonance". The idea is that if a news item is consonant with the mental set or image of the newsmen, it will be more readily assimilated. Similarly, new events without immediate precedent may be assimilated into the frame of reference of earlier accepted images. As news stories about class and ethnic issues are "conventionally" in meager amount since they are in processual forms, class and ethnic events are easily assimilated into the frame of other more common events. When two neighbors of different ethnicities quarreled, it is easily seen as a trivial conflict between two ordinary people. When a factory employer celebrates new year with his workers, it is easily comprehended as a mere social gathering and "human interest" story. Seldom are the meanings behind these events explored by the journalists.

Probably, both the Mass Manipulative Model and the Bureaucratic-Ideational Model account in part for the meager attention given to socially disruptive issues by the media. But more investigation is certainly needed to determine which model explains the media's systemic indifference to disruptive issues better.

Media's Subtle Role in Social Integration

The little attention given to ethnic and class issues in the four newspapers raises the question whether media do play an integrative or disintegrative role at all. On the surface, the findings rejected the hypothesis that mass communication contributes to social integration. Nevertheless, these findings also led us to think that the integrative role of media might be more subtle than what we originally thought.

In spite of the little attention given to ethnic and class issues, mass media may still play an integrative role by taking these issues off the agenda. As Cohen puts it, the press "may not be successful much of time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."[20] Lazarsfeld & his colleagues in their study on voting also notes that "insofar as mass media of communication led to conversion at all, it was through a **redefinition** (emphasis added) of the issues; issues about which people had previously thought very little or had been little concerned, took on a new importance as they were accented by campaign propaganda."[21]

Through their systemic indifference to the class and ethnic issues, the newspapers may already serve to define the social reality in a different way. When they talk about the agenda-setting function of mass media, most authors emphasize only the linkage between what people think as major issues and the media attention to these issues.[22] In fact, mass media may function more subtly in not reporting certain issues and shutting out the readers' awareness of them. By a simple indifference to the class and ethnic issues, the mass media may have created a "reality" in which these issues are unimportant. Perhaps when people are not aware of an issue, the media already serve an integrative role. Moreover, by setting some other non-controversial events on the agenda such as crimes, disasters and sports, or non-issues such as official visits to and from different countries, or public activities of local officials, people of different ethnicities and class backgrounds may interact amicably on the same topics, forming a "we-feeling" of trust and mutual consideration. Apart from the news stories, it should also be remembered that newspapers generally also contain a large amount of entertaining materials such as fictions, movie reviews and feature stories about a country's culture or history. All of these can contribute to social integration.

On the other hand, in playing merely a role of deciding what is to be on and off the agenda, the media cannot be disintegrative as they put most of the disruptive issues off the agenda. Even if a society is very heterogeneous, its disintegration, if it occurs, cannot be attributed to the newspapers because the newspapers do not arouse people's consciousness of the issues at all, at least not in the four newspapers examined in this study. A society cannot disintegrate if its people are not aware of what the issues are. But, on the other hand, a society can integrate or at least have the potential to integrate through other means if the disruptive issues are not recognized by its people.

Of course, saying so does not mean that a society cannot integrate if the people are aware of the social issues. Indeed, the awareness of the disruptive issues by the people can be a healthy step toward integration. What is intended here is that media cannot be the agent of disintegration if they do not arouse the people's awareness of the issues because of their systemic indifference to the issues. On the other hand, by defining a common and non-controversial reality through their agenda-setting function, the media may help to create a common symbolic environment for people to interact "amicably" or "unconsciously". It has to be noted again such an "integration" need not be really healthy since it might have just concealed the conflicts instead of finding out solutions to the problems.

Nevertheless, given the situation in which the disruptive issues are not sensitized in the newspapers, it is argued that newspapers cannot be a factor contributing to disintegration. We emphasize that a society can disintegrate only when the people are aware of the issues, and the media *can be* contributive to disintegration *only when* they sensitize the issues first of all. But on the other hand, the media can be integrative when they reduce the salience of the disruptive issues by putting the issues off the agenda. The media's role in integration and disintegration may be more subtle than what we ordinarily assume.

Summary

To sum up, we found that the newspapers contained very few integrative or disintegrative messages. Seldom did they pay attention to the disruptive issues of ethnicity or class. Because of the meager attention given to the disruptive issues, we reason that mass communication cannot play a disintegrative role since a particular group of people will have to know what the issues are before they could take issue with other groups of people, which may then result in social disintegration. Mass communication could not provide such knowledge as they show a systemic indifference to the disruptive issues. On the other hand, mass communication may play an integrative role subtly. The integrative function may be carried out not through the news content of the media, but through reducing the salience of the socially disruptive issues by a systemic rejection of these issues from the news agenda.

Note

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Table 1
Selected Indicators of Stability & Poverty in Nigeria, Guyana, Singapore and Hong Kong

	NIGERIA	GUYANA	SINGAPORE	HONG KONG
Incidents of civil disorders[1] (1948-1977)	876	259	124	291
Deaths from political violence (politically motivated killings) (1948-1977)	1,995,417	346	179	243
Percentage of population in[2] absolute poverty (1980)	30	17	6	7

[1] The incidents of civil disorders are counted by the Center for Social Analysis at Binghamton, New York. The Center identifies eight common manifestations of civil disorder: (1) assassination, (2) general strikes, (3) guerilla incidents, (4) government crises, (5) purges, (6) riots, (7) revolutions, (8) anti-government demonstrations.
Source: George T. Kurian The New Book of World Rankings, N.Y.: Facts on File, 1983.

[2] Absolute poverty is the standard below the poverty level set by governments of developed countries.

Table 2
Attitudes Towards Upper & Lower Occupational Groups, and Ethnic Majority & Minority Groups in *Daily Times, Guyana Chronicle, Straits Times* and *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* (%)

	Daily Times (N = 720)						*Guyana Chronicle* (N = 1,231)					
	Unfav	Neut	Favor	C.C.	Other	TOTAL(%)	Unfav	Neut	Favor	C.C.	Other	TOTAL(%)
Attitude Towards Upper Groups	2.5	12.8	4.3	0	80.4	100	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.1	98.3	100
Attitude Towards Lower Groups	1.0	4.7	3.2	0	91.1	100	0	1.1	2.2	0	96.8	100
Attitude Towards Ethnic Majority	0.3	0.3	0.1	0	99.3	100	0.1	0.6	0.2	0	99.1	100
Attitude Towards Ethnic Minority	0.3	0	0.1	0	99.6	100	0	0.8	0.4	0	98.8	100

Unfav = Unfavorable

Neut = Neutral

Favor = Favorable

C.C. = Constructively Critical

Table 2 (Continued)
Attitudes Towards Upper & Lower Occupational Groups, and Ethnic Majority & Minority Groups in *Daily Times, Guyana Chronicle, Straits Times* and *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* (%)

	Straits Times (N = 1,787)						*Wah Kiu Yat Pao* (N = 753)					
	Unfav	Neut	Favor	C.C.	Other	TOTAL(%)	Unfav	Neut	Favor	C.C.	Other	TOTAL(%)
Attitude Towards Upper Groups	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.1	98.5	100	0	0.8	0.3	0	98.5	100
Attitude Towards Lower Groups	0.3	0.9	0.3	0	98.4	100	0	0.8	0.3	0	98.5	100
Attitude Towards Ethnic Majority	0.2	0.2	0.3	0	99.3	100	0	0.5	0	0	99.5	100
Attitude Towards Ethnic Minority	0.2	0.2	0.7	0	98.9	100	0	0.5	0.3	0	99.2	100

Unfav = Unfavorable
Neut = Neutral

Favor = Favorable
C.C. = Constructively Critical

Tabel 3
Proportions of Different Categories of News in the Four Major Newspapers of Nigeria, Guyana, Singapore and Hong Kong(%)

	%
Military/Violence	9.0
Foreign Relations	12.8
Foreign/Political	8.8
Domestic/Political	7.5
Economic	11.1
Sports	6.1
Crime/Judicial	13.5
Human Interest	5.8
Accident/Disaster	5.6
Science/Health	3.1
Energy/Environment	1.2
Human Rights	1.2
Education	3.3
Art/Culture	2.0
Religion	1.0
Labor	2.1
Other	5.8
TOTAL	100%
	N = 4,491

A NEW VOICE AGAINST APARTHEID:
SOUTH AFRICA'S ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Presented at the AEJMC Convention,
Minneapolis, 1990

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Among the many changes in South Africa in the 1980s was the rise of a cluster of newspapers known as the alternative press. Its protagonists and practitioners regard the emergence of these papers as the most vibrant, influential and heartening development in that country's media in the 1980s.

Detractors of these papers, most notably the government, take a dramatically different view, seeing them as a serious threat to peaceful, evolutionary change in that society. In word and deed, the government subjected the alternative press to a vitriolic verbal onslaught, in parliament and out. It used an extensive array of legal and administrative measures to threaten, silence, intimidate and impoverish these publications, just short of actually closing them permanently.[1]

The intense scrutiny the government gave these papers indicates that, despite their youth, the alternative press has attained an influence greater than its limited size and circulation suggest. These papers mirror and parallel the major changes occurring in South Africa. At this level they illuminate shifts in South African society, as these papers, like any other politically motivated publications, both reflect and shape their constituencies' views. The alternative papers also merit scrutiny because they provide an early indication of what an important part of tomorrow's press might look like. Specifically, two questions command attention: what is the alternative press, and what has been its contribution to South African society thus far?

Defining the Alternative Press

The alternative papers analyzed here are in a sense the "news" vehicles of a much larger, highly diverse and ever changing set of publications. Those addressed in this paper are all tabloids, and with a single exception, all weeklies. Their circulations are less than 30,000, except for New Nation, a black paper espousing the views of the African National Congress. Its circulation is approximately 73,000. The Weekly Mail was established in 1985, by former staffers of the Rand Daily Mail, following that paper's death. Vrye Weekblad is read primarily by Afrikaans, and hence white, subscribers. The Indicator caters mostly to Asian readers. These four publications are based in or near Johannesburg. South and New African are published in Cape Town and Durban respectively, and have predominantly black, Asian or mixed race readerships.

These six papers constitute only a small fraction of the alternative press, yet they are vitally important because compared with other alternative publications they have a wide reach, high frequency of publication, relatively large circulations, and are among the most professionally produced. These publications constitute the leading and best known of the alternative press. Two others of note are Grassroots and Saamstaan, which are produced less frequently, and follow more of a newsletter format.

Heard says there are "200 or more"[2] alternative papers, but given the fluid character of this sector of the press, the exact number is impossible to determine. Nor is that really important. Far more significant is their character and their impact. Regarding their diversity, Patel says: "These publications are aimed at different audiences, fulfilling different roles and meeting different needs. Some are literary and cultural; others theoretical and analytical; there is the student press, the community press, trade union newsletters and more recently, publications of political organizations."[3]

The first distinctive of the alternative press is its genesis and grounding in what has become known as the extra-parliamentary movement, those anti-apartheid political activities occurring outside the channels and structures established by the government. What characterizes the alternative press is not simply that it is political. So are the English and especially the Afrikaans newspapers, the latter having been founded expressly to promote the National Party and later the Nationalist government's programs. Rather, its distinctiveness lies in a lengthy tradition of opposition to apartheid and white domination. The alternative press has a history dating to the early 1900s, and these papers are thus natural heirs to a long tradition of media opposition to the government. The English press also has a long anti-apartheid record, but its philosophical and commercial basis are generally quite different, and its primary political focus remains the parliamentary system.

What is important in this latest resurgence of an anti-apartheid press is that by the mid-1980s, the extra-parliamentary movement had enough political power to launch not one but a variety of papers. This growing strength corresponded to the decline in Pretoria's ability to govern virtually as it pleased, essentially immune to any serious challenge to its power.

Like their forerunners, contemporary alternative papers[4] also explicitly attempts to serve as a voice for the political cause that gave it birth. Akhalwaya says that "what sets the emerging press apart from the mainstream press is that we write from a different perspective -- the liberation perspective, for want of a better description."[5] In addition, the alternative papers are generally identified by the close ties to the organizations and community groups from which they have grown. Jaffer refers to this critically important symbiosis: "The alternative, community based newspapers are ... unashamedly partisan. Whereas the commercial press tends to adopt a tone of neutrality ... , papers like Grassroots locate themselves squarely within the community of oppressed people and all those striving for democracy, and report from their perspective. These papers report the facts truthfully and honestly, from a position irrevocably committed to the struggle against apartheid."[6] This bond between publication and people is an important difference between the alternative press and what Jaffer terms the commercial, or mainstream, press. Perhaps the closest parallel in the mainstream press would be the ties between the present Afrikaans newspapers during their earliest days and the struggling, impoverished Afrikaner populace looking to its own nationalism for salvation. The depth and power of those ties, however, have long faded.

Not so with the alternative press. These publications are decidedly a "people's press," and are hence participants in a two-way process. First, they seek to articulate the political aspirations of the people whose views they share, drawing heavily upon this majority segment of the population for the news and opinion that fill their pages. In addition, though, they place themselves in a position of unusual accountability to their readers. Unlike the editors in the mainstream press, whose accountability is spread among management, readers and ultimately shareholders, their alternative press counterparts feel far more obligated to representing accurately reality as perceived by their readers and the community leadership. This means that these publications tend to grow out of a need by a community or an organization for a vehicle of communication. This is especially so with community newsletters like the pioneering Grassroots, whose background Louw describes in detail. On its community links, he says:

> Grassroots developed from the premise that community issues were central to its raison d'etre. From the very outset community

> organizations were involved in the Grassroots project: in December 1978 WASA [Writers Association of South Africa] approached about 50 community organizations, civic and worker groups in the Western Cape concerning the idea of starting such a newspaper. Only once endorsement was granted was the project set in motion during 1979.[7]

Like many of the alternative publications, Grassroots began from the ground up. Publications in the mainstream press, by contrast, are invariably "top down," in the sense that their founders begin with an idea in search of a readership. In addition, this community or organizational base may go a critical step further, and on many publications editorial content and decisions are to a high degree determined by community or organizational representatives.

Even though this may be the ideal, such participation may not always occur in practice, as Patel notes: "While we are committed to participation and decision-making by organizations in the entire operation, in reality the responsibility for bringing out our newspapers has rested on the shoulders of a few people."[8] Another caveat must be mentioned regarding this egalitarian, "editing by consensus" approach to publishing. On the more sophisticated weekly and bi-weekly papers that are the focus of this study, like New Nation, South, and the Weekly Mail such high levels of consensus editing would be cripplingly inefficient. Nevertheless, even these publications employ an egalitarian approach to producing their papers that is utterly alien to the mainstream press. Quite simply, the alternative newspapers manifest a common organizational culture markedly different from that of the mainstream press. This culture includes a high level of commitment to a common purpose, a sense of unity and camaraderie, and a pervasive egalitarian ethos. This culture, with its own vocabulary, norms and expectations, resembles that of a religious movement. Utterly convinced of the rightness of their cause, those in the alternative press are ready to continue "the struggle" regardless of the cost. The objective of that struggle, however, calls for closer attention, because understanding the alternative press's motivations helps highlight its distinctiveness.

Generally, the extra-parliamentary movement and its press are committed to far more fundamental socio-political change than the mainstream press and the white populace whose views it most closely reflects. In drawing the contrast between the mainstream and alternative press, Akhalwaya says:

> The mainstream newspapers by and large believe in either supporting the government's political structures, or wanting these structures modified to include black people. All of them believe in the free enterprise system. The emerging newspapers believe that the political and economic structures must be radically altered in a society based on universal franchise irrespective of racial or other considerations.[9]

Not surprisingly, the depth of these differences forms the basis for other distinctives of the alternative press. Not the least of these is that the mainstream press is profit oriented, and the alternative press is not. The alternative papers were not launched as money-making ventures; nor do any presently embrace a commercial, profit-motivated rationale for their papers. While editors would greatly welcome financial self-sufficiency and several are working toward this end, that is seen simply as incidental to their purpose: to present a message. The Weekly Mail has been particularly successful, by alternative standards, in attracting advertising, although its co-editor Harber says it remains an ongoing difficulty for the paper.[10] At one level, the problem for the more economically viable alternative papers is manifested in a deep wariness of being driven more and more by the marketplace rather than political values. These editors must at times be tempted to sell their paper's soul for what they would see as a Faustian deal for financial security. So, when these papers see the currency in which the market system requires one to trade, the alternative press chooses not to pay. As Barrell says, these publications "have sought to free themselves from the political limitations which flow from the dictates of advertising and commercialism...."[11]

But the alternative press's approach to commercialism goes far beyond simply not embracing it. In keeping with the views embraced by the extra-parliamentary movement as a whole, the alternative press displays views ranging from suspicion to outright hostility and opposition to South Africa's economic system and the mainstream press which has embraced it. In discussing meanings of the term "alternative media," for example, Emdon says "'Alternative' assumes a political and economic identity of its own. It is anti-capitalist .... There is no half-way, we cannot use the same structures of organisation and control of the commercial press."[12]

Mansoor Jaffer, former fulltime organizer for Grassroots, lists what he sees as fundamental flaws in the mainstream press:

> Managerial control in the hands of businessmen; pandering to the prejudices of a backward and myopic readership; and a tendency to seek accommodation within the government's media schemes -- these are important features of the commercial press in the eyes of black communities. It is because commercial papers fail to honestly reflect both the reality of life in those communities, or their aspirations for a non-racial and democratic South Africa, that the need arises for an alternative press.[13]

He makes explicit a vitally important connection between the commercial orientation of the mainstream press and its editorial content. Alternative press editors differ in the degree to which they fault the mainstream press coverage of crucial issues. But all agree that this coverage and status quo orientation constitute crucial flaws, and that the alternative press is needed to fill the resulting gap. Some alternative editors might oppose the idea of a capitalist press in principle, and probably all strongly reject the highly oligopolistic form the mainstream press takes in South Africa. For most of them, the immediate problem is the ideological roots and consequent editorial content of the mainstream press. For these reasons, the alternative press differs markedly from its mainstream counterpart in its financial orientation, and these papers are committed to operating outside the financially independent, profit-oriented mode that typifies most South African and western newspapers.

The deficiencies alternative press leaders see in the mainstream press lead to another issue: the style of journalism the newer papers practice. At issue is the very role of the journalist in a polarized society like South Africa. The editor of New Nation, Zwelakhe Sisulu, gets to the heart of the matter:

> The press cannot be neutral. When newspapers in this country claim to be neutral they are actually serving the interests of the ruling class. I would take the view that no reporter can be objective, no newspaper can be neutral, and that for newspapers to be acceptable to people, they must reflect their social reality. This is the bottom line. And they are not doing it.[14]

The need thus arises for a press that unambiguously speaks out from another perspective, one that -- Sisulu and others would say -- demands that journalists reject the myth of their supposed neutrality and objectivity. Indeed, they ought to take a further step. Sisulu says: "I think we've reached a point where journalists should not only be reporting on what's happening in society -- they should help society find solutions, to look for alternatives. It is not enough to say, X said this and Y said that, as if you yourself do not have a point of view or a contribution to make."[15]

By itself, its embracing of advocacy journalism will not set the alternative press apart from mainstream papers, especially not the Afrikaans press. Latakgomo points out for example that "the Afrikaans Press and the radio and television services are as good an example as any of 'advocacy journalism.'"[16] The difference is rather one of degree. What is noteworthy about the alternative papers, ranging from the most informal community newsletter to the sophisticated newspapers examined here, is its conscious and unapologetic embracing of advocacy journalism. This style of journalism is often fundamentally at odds with the traditional "objective" journalism typical of much western and especially United States news reporting and interpretation.

Two other features of the alternative press are their avowed editorial objectives and their papers' actual content. The alternative press differs enough from the mainstream press in both these areas for one to use them as additional benchmarks in seeking to identify an alternative paper. A proposal for the launch of South listed objectives typical of the alternative press. They highlight the gap between the alternative press and the mainstream papers. No mainstream editors, for example, would ever define their task as seeking to "articulate the needs and aspirations of the oppressed and exploited," whether using those terms or not. To say nothing of the intention "to challenge and break the monopolistic control of [mainstream] newspapers...."[17]

Other, informally stated objectives emphasize the gap between the alternative and mainstream papers. One objective already referred to is that of supplementing the news coverage of the mainstream papers. The alternative papers are concerned with both the mainstream press's sins of commission and omission. So the alternative papers try to cover issues of importance that they believe are ignored or downplayed, as well as seeking to counter media portrayals and information they see as inaccurate or distorted. Examples of addressing the gaps include greater focus on organizations in the extra-parliamentary movement, the labor front and trade unions, rural areas and the non-racial sport movement in South Africa. On the local or community level, community papers have addressed issues "such as poor maintenance of the houses in the townships; electricity problems; women calling for maternity benefits at work and the demands of workers for protective clothing on the factory floor."[18]

In a quite different category, however, are what the alternative press sees as the sins of commission. These are typically rooted in the explicitly and implicitly held values of the mainstream press, and closely reflect those of the white South Africans generally. They include such volatile and contentious issues as the sanctions movement, consumer boycotts, the end-conscription campaign, the ANC, and the international sports boycott against South Africa. On issues like these, the mainstream and alternative press approach their society and its potential solutions from quite different world views. This gulf indicates that the alternative and mainstream papers' very definitions of South African society often differ drastically.

While the alternative paper's editors are well aware that they are preaching primarily to the converted, their dual task is affirm the faithful and proselytize those who are still unbelievers. Indeed, a major challenge facing the alternative papers is to broaden their base and widen the constituencies to which they appeal. This is especially so for the two weeklies catering mostly to white readers, the Vrye Weekblad and the Weekly

Mail.

The alternative press, in its present form, is still young, and its constituent papers are still clarifying their individual and collective roles. Patel summarizes this process by noting that "Our watchword has been to learn, to propagandise and to organise."[19] The alternative press is plainly committed to politicizing its readership, educating them not only about the nuts and bolts of daily life but also raising their awareness of political issues and helping to equip them with an ideology with which to counter the status quo. "Its purpose," in other words, "has been to develop a critical awareness and understanding of the nature of our society and of our struggle."[20]

The discussion thus far has emphasized the alternative press's raison d'etre as an openly declared participant in "the struggle." This emphasis ought not to obscure the high quality journalism that some alternative papers seek to practice. To many in the mainstream press, it will seem mutually exclusive for alternative editors to shun traditional objective style journalism and simultaneously claim to strive for fairness, accuracy and honesty in their news coverage.

Alternative press editors and journalists disagree. Except for the community newspapers Grassroots and Saamstaan, the editors of all the alternative papers discussed here previously worked in the mainstream press. The result, Akhalwaya says, is that they "will not allow their reporters to get away with distortions. They have too much at stake to risk losing their credibility and self-respect."[21] These editors speak forcefully of their commitment to factual, accurate reporting.

Despite their commitment to factual reporting and accuracy, alternative press editors are well aware of the ideologically laden freight their papers carry, and the indefinable line that separates news coverage and propaganda. They are aware too of the danger of becoming witting or unwitting propagandists for their cause. Akhalwaya says, "To counter the things that the SABC does, we at times become counter-propagandists."[22] Du Preez also acknowledges this danger. Yet given the unusual nature of South African society, embracing advocacy journalism is necessary, he believes: "In a distorted reality like ours you sometimes need that."[23]

For the government and other critics of the alternative press, statements like these confirm their insistence that these papers constitute a propagandistic press.[24] Someone like Akhalwaya pleads guilty as charged, given his definition of propaganda: "We genuinely believe we are propagandists for a fair society and genuine democracy. But there's a danger here that we might not be able to see our own undemocratic actions." He adds that the diversity of newspaper voices, both mainstream and alternative, "help keep you honest."[25]

Journalists like Akhalwaya and Du Preez contend that they are at least aware of their biases and values, and openly proclaim them -- which is a marked improvement over the supposedly neutral but equally ideologically committed mainstream press.

The concentration thus far on the differences between the mainstream and the alternative press is not to imply that the latter papers are some monolithic cluster of like-minded, generic leftwing publications. Akhalwaya describes the different perspectives and target audiences of the alternative papers, their different attitudes to accepting advertising, and their different editorial tone and character. "The New Nation, for example, is probably the most serious of these papers in that it seldom sees the funny side of anything in South Africa. That is not a criticism, but an indication of its approach.... South is also serious, but its approach is probably more British-style, it does take the mickey out of officialdom, it does cover a lot of entertainment."[26]

The Vrye Weekblad and Weekly Mail have predominantly white readerships, unlike the rest of the alternative press. Harber refers to his readers as "slumpies," or "Slightly Left, Upwardly Mobile Professionals," most living in Johannesburg's affluent northern suburbs.[27] Vrye Weekblad's readership is embarrassingly elite, says Du Preez. Four out of five readers are university educated, and half have more than one degree.[28]

Can papers like these be regarded as stablemates of a New Nation or a Saamstaam, for example? Yes, despite the large differences between them. As a group, the alternative papers have enough features in common for them to be viewed as an entity -- at least, at this stage in their history. Also, these papers see themselves as sharing a common identity, despite their significant differences. Especially important in cementing their identity are two final features of the alternative press that merit attention.

The first is the government's reaction to its political orientation and message; the second concerns its vulnerability. The government has responded to the opposition and harshly critical message of the alternative papers with a series of attacks notable even in South Africa for their ferocity. Moreover, the techniques the government has used to battle the alternative press, primarily under the emergency regulations, have attained an astonishing new level of utter disregard for press freedom.[29] The government's anti-press measures imposed under the state of emergency in the latter half of the 1980s applied of course to the mainstream and alternative press, and to the foreign press. But the government made no secret that its primary target inside the country, at least, were the alternative papers. Another distinctive of the alternative papers, then, is their status as a press under siege by the government. Clearly, both the alternative and mainstream press are subject to sustained government attack, but it is the former group that gets closest scrutiny and is hardest hit.

Then there is the question of these papers' vulnerability. Compared with the mainstream press, they all have small circulations, draw little advertising, and are underfunded, understaffed and at times unorganized. These weaknesses and others are hardly exclusive to the alternative press; other segments of the South African press experience similar difficulties.[30] They take on particular importance for the alternative press in view of its being targeted for sustained government attack. Religious publications or small town weeklies can, and do, plod along with these problems year after year. For alternative papers, however, a chronic shortage of funds takes on ominous dimensions in the wake of sustained and costly legal battles. Nor can shortstaffed newsrooms afford to have editors and other colleagues spend most of their working days addressing legal problems -- or even worse, languish in jail month after month without charge. These problems are serious enough for large, financially secure mainstream papers, but when they strike the alternative papers it can be fatal.

Reasons for the Rise of the Alternative Press

No single reason is responsible for the rise of these papers, and several have already been hinted at. Among them are the weaknesses in the mainstream press and the growing sense among elements in the extra-parliamentary movement that they urgently needed their own media vehicles. The fuller explanation goes deeper, and is integrally related to South Africa's recent political history. As the previous section made clear, the alternative press is very much part of the movement for fundamental political change in the country. What is not as apparent is why the alternative press arose when it did. It is noteworthy that except for Grassroots, the alternative press emerged during the state of emergency. By the mid-1980s, the extra-parliamentary movement had enough political power to launch not one but a variety of papers. This growing political strength corresponded to the decline in Pretoria's ability to govern virtually as it pleased, essentially immune to any serious challenge to its power.

Another factor was the availability of desktop publishing. The Weekly Mail pioneered the use of this new technology, which offers the alternative press considerable flexibility and savings in their production. Pinnock, in his accounting of the revival of the alternative press in the 1980s, says "They were soon to add telefax, teletype and inter-city computer networking. The appearance of the Weekly Mail on the streets demonstrated the possibilities of cheap, high-tech newspaper production -- and issued in a new era of desk-top publishing."[31]

The Contribution of the Alternative Press

Despite its newness, the current cluster of alternative papers has substantially affected the institution of the South African press. At least five noteworthy contributions can be identified.

A complement to the existing media:

The alternative press's most evident contribution is that it offers an alternative viewpoint to South African readers. The limitations of the mainstream press, and the particular political and ideological premises from which the English and Afrikaans papers proceed give their readers a view of reality that many South Africans find incomplete at best, or offensive and hostile at worst. The alternative press brings different emphases and perspectives. The result is that important but previously neglected areas of South African life now receive coverage.

As already noted, the alternative press sees its task both as providing information that mainstream papers do not, and countering incorrect information or impressions. Pointing to the gap in certain kinds of coverage left by the Rand Daily Mail's death, Akhalwaya says:

> The role of these independent newspapers has been not only to partially fill the vacuum created by the Mail's closure, but also to go beyond what the Mail stood for. Our role has been to provide information -- news or opinion -- that the mainstream papers ignore. ... Our role has also been to counter the increasingly blatant -- and increasingly sophisticated -- propaganda of the National Party and its junior partners of all hues. And it has further been to counter the nonsense some newspapers give us about what black people are supposed to be thinking -- and who is thinking for them.[32]

The alternative papers have enriched the quality of South Africa's media in at least two additional ways. They have helped keep the mainstream press on their toes, forcing them to take account of stories and issues of which they may previously have been ignorant, or which they may have thought were not newsworthy. The Weekly Mail in particular has become mandatory reading for any editor taking his job seriously.[33]

They have also provided another vehicle for expression of public views, an invaluable contribution considering the high concentration of media voices in

South Africa. Now, people in the rural areas, for example, have a channel to voice their concerns. In the past they were virtually ignored by the mainstream press. Similarly, the community publications have succeeded in localizing the newspaper medium, focusing directly on their readers' concerns in ways previously untried in South Africa.

Clearly, the alternative press has enriched the quality and range of information available to South Africans in important ways. Nevertheless, these papers cannot, and do not, claim to provide news, information or interpretation to most South Africans. None publishes more frequently than weekly. Therefore the intensive and comprehensive news coverage that characterizes a good daily newspaper is simply not within the mission or scope of the alternative press. Daily newspapering remains the exclusive bailiwick of the mainstream papers. Recognizing this reality, Akhalwaya writes that the alternative papers "are complementary to, rather than an alternative to, the mainstream newspapers." He continues: "That is why all of us [in the alternative press], to whichever political ideology or prejudices we subscribe, rely on the commercial daily press ...; and that is why the mainstream press is so vital -- with or without its commercial and editorial slant."[34] Du Preez, comparing the Vrye Weekblad's role with that of the largest circulation Afrikaans daily, says: "We don't want to take the place of Beeld. We can coexist."[35]

Like salt, the alternative press has added to and enriched what people have been used to eating. Like yeast, it has also begun to transform that to which it is added. And it is not only the press whose character is changed.

A Catalyst in the Political Process:

Another of the alternative press's contributions has been "to open up the field of political debate," says Pat Sidley, a former president of the South African Society of Journalists. "Suddenly the ANC was written about; every loophole that could be found was used."[36] Similarly, the alternative press was in the forefront of covering the most contentious political issues of the day: the situation of political detainees, especially children; prison conditions; the conscientious objection campaign; police and military action against political protestors; the growth of the trade union movement; and so on. These issues were also covered by the mainstream press, sometimes with distinction, but most often not. Unquestionably, covering these areas became the forte of the alternative press.

The result is that the alternative press has not merely influenced the agenda for the mainstream press; it has done so precisely on the hot political issues of the day. The mainstream press is assumed to influence politics significantly, although measuring that impact is impossible. Similarly, the alternative press must also be assumed to have an effect on South Africa's political process. Patel says, "The alternative press has been a catalyst for the initiation and the building of democratic people's organisations."[37] The extent of its effectiveness in the political realm per se is a question that goes beyond the scope of this paper. The government, at least, does not feel the need for in-depth research to be convinced of what it sees as the alternative press's political potential, and the threat it is seen to pose to the political order.

A Prototype for Tomorrow's Press:

The alternative press models key features of what a growing segment of tomorrow's press in South Africa will probably look like. Assuming the absence of massive government intervention from either the present or a future government, the alternative press has an assured future. Moreover, South Africa's press will be increasingly black -- in ownership, control and readership. It will also embrace political positions closer to those of the alternative papers than those of the mainstream press. It could be a largely subsidized press, like the present alternative papers. The writing too is likely to be closer to that of the advocacy journalism embraced by the alternative papers.

In all, then, the alternative press offers something of a prototype of the kind of papers that are increasingly likely to make up tomorrow's press. This is not to say they are about to replace the mainstream press. Far from it. What _is_ important is their role as a model for future alternative papers to follow, learning from the present papers' successes and mistakes.

Lastly, the very existence of the alternative press reveals a diversity in South African newspapers that did not exist in the early 1980s. This quality undoubtedly presages the kind of diversity that will mark tomorrow's press too.

A Commitment to Press Freedom:

Paying tribute to the fight that alternative editors and other journalists have waged for press freedom in South Africa is _not_ intended to denigrate the long and costly battle their mainstream peers have waged. The point is simply that the alternative press has shown a vigorous and even aggressive willingness to tackle the government on a succession of legal issues.[38] In waging a series of challenges against restrictive legislation or administrative actions, the alternative papers have done much to keep the issue of press freedom in the public eye.

A Contribution to the Profession:

The alternative papers have particularly emphasized training, especially for beginning journalists and recruits to other areas of newspaper work. This careful focus on the short-term and long-term needs of South African journalism, or at least the segment that the alternative press represents, is a unique development. It constitutes the largest, most diverse and extensive commitment to journalism training in the country's history. This effort is fraught with deficiencies and running well below its potential. Yet the alternative papers' training activities are notable because they go far beyond those of individual newspaper groups, like the Argus company's highly regarded cadet school. Not only has the alternative press opened the doors to scores of young journalists who could otherwise never have entered this field, these papers have taken extensive measures to train these recruits. The alternative papers have thus begun addressing the country's acute shortage of black journalists in particular in tangible ways, affording them hands on experience. In doing so, they clearly seek to address their immediate staffing needs. But the commitment goes much deeper, to building up a group of journalists capable of running tomorrow's newspapers. By highlighting the shortage, and addressing it head on, these papers are making a salutary contribution to the larger profession.

In addition, the resurgence of the alternative press has raised anew questions about the nature and responsibilities of journalism in South Africa. The fierce debates over objectivity and advocacy journalism, press responsibility, and the part of journalists in seeking political change began long before the rise of the current alternative press. These papers have enriched discussion of these issues, either raising them directly or because the very journalism they practice does.

Assessment and Evaluation

Even more than the people involved in the alternative press, those admiring its work from the sidelines can easily romanticize the part these papers play in South Africa's political process. To the extent that all participants in the extra-parliamentary movement are seen as valiant and flawless warriors in a cosmic battle between the forces of good and the ultimate evil of apartheid, so too the alternative press is accorded such hallowed status. Perhaps history will evaluate the alternative press's role in these terms; a more immediate analysis, however, demands a willingness to look at these papers' shortcomings. That is the final task of this paper.

The alternative press has attained an importance that belies its new status. Already, this vibrant press has made a significant impact on the country's journalism, and, although more difficult to assess, on its politics too. Akhalwaya offers an insider's view of the longer term value of the alternative press. "When history looks at South Africa, it will get much information from the alternative press. The papers are getting the debate about the new society going."[39] That history will learn much from these barometers of South African society is unquestioned; that these papers deserve credit for "getting the debate going" is not. Whatever the mainstream press's weaknesses, it is not as if it has lived in a political vacuum all these years. It too has been a major player in setting the political agenda, although this is admittedly primarily among the white electorate. Indeed, as Akhalwaya and others in the alternative press would agree, the mainstream papers have long had and continue to fill an overwhelmingly dominant role in the South African press. There is thus a danger, evident in the remarks of both those inside the alternative press and those sympathetic to it, of greatly overestimating its present journalistic and political influence. The total combined circulation of The Indicator, New Nation, South, Vrye Weekblad and Weekly Mail (all weeklies except the bi-weekly Indicator) stood at less than 150,000 in early 1990.[40] Compare that with the average daily circulation of the country's largest paper, The Star, of more than 200,000.[41] As Barrell concedes of the alternative press, "These organs remain still peripheral interventions in their size and distribution...."[42]

Nor do the alternative papers offer the fully developed, day-to-day coverage of news that is the great strength of the daily press. Consequently, readers seeking the full range of a typical daily's offerings find the alternative papers lacking. That is not to fault these papers for defining their editorial identity and mission as they have; it is merely to note that the mainstream press produces the bulk of South African journalism and all its daily papers.

Because the alternative press is still young, it is undergoing many of the problems associated with new institutions. The difficulties of limited funding, ill-trained journalists, personnel shortages, and organizational and management weaknesses all hinder these papers in reaching their potential.

Another weakness, paradoxically, stems from these papers' great strength. The depth of their commitment to a particular political perspective can narrow their journalistic vision in exactly the same way it leads to myopia in the mainstream press. Like the mainstream press, whose failings they seek to redress, the alternative papers can also view life narrowly, and present a distorted, one-sided view of reality. Not surprisingly, this is the chief complaint of mainstream editors, even those sympathetic to the alternative press. To overstate the case, if the mainstream press is guilty of offering a frothy diet of sport, semi-naked women and yet more ways to make quiche, then the alternative press offers a predictable stodginess that knows of nothing beyond the grimmest of South Africa's political realities.

Fortunately, neither extreme is accurate. In addition, the undoubtedly strong temptation for the alternative papers to view all of reality through the filter of extra-parliamentary politics is offset by the realities of flesh and blood readers for whom life consists of more than the anti-apartheid struggle. Williams, for example, tells how South needed to adjust to the realities of its marketplace. His paper serves both African and Coloured readers. The latter, South found on launching the paper, were less hungry for political news than the African readership. This difference, as well as differences in economic development, presented a problem. "Our initial reading of the situation was wrong; we came out with a very political paper. It sold well in the African community but not in the Coloured community," Williams says. "It's a fact of life that squatters are living in the rain, but people don't want to keep reading this." The result? "We tried to integrate into the paper elements that would appeal to a wider range of people. We no longer have heavy social commentary all the way through."[43] Changes include an insert known as "Southside" that includes crossword puzzles, recipes and what Williams describes as "soap opera" serials.

South's experience suggests that as the alternative press matures, it will adjust to the demands of its environment, tempering its passion to include what people actually want to read in addition to what editors believe they ought to read. Vrye Weekblad's Du Preez says, "The alternative press should get more mature and sophisticated now. We should put our anger more in perspective, and have more of a sense of humor. We tend to be angry political agents, but I think we can now afford to become more complete newspapers."[44]

Despite such "growing up," the temptation and pressure for the alternative journalists to become propagandists remains, as Akhalwaya and Du Preez admitted earlier. That is a difficulty that the journalists alone can combat. It is a serious one, for it is on this front that it is most vulnerable to government attack. Ready to condemn these papers as a revolutionary press, bent on unleashing violence in a highly volatile nation, the government has repeatedly shown its willingness to act harshly against any voices it finds intolerable. The future of the alternative press is thus highly dependent on the bona fides of the present government's claims that it indeed is open to the voices of opposition.

Should the alternative papers survive the early years of the 1990s, they will increasingly entrench themselves as part of the South African press. In 1986 New Nation's Sisulu said, "The alternative media in this country are in the process of becoming the mainstream media."[45] Perhaps, but that day is still far off. What is already reality is a small but vigorous press that South Africa's other papers, its various publics, and especially its government are taking more and more seriously.

Endnotes

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13. Jaffer, p. 4.

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17. Boesak, Allan, and Rashid Seria. "Weekly newspaper project and journalism training project." Unpublished paper; no date; p. 3.

18. Patel, p. 12.

19. Patel, p. 12.

20. Patel, p. 13.

21. Akhalwaya, p. 17.

22. Interview with Akhalwaya; September 1989.

23. Interview with Du Preez; September 1989.

24. See for example the remarks of the Minister of Home Affairs, Stoffel Botha, in Conflict and the Press, Harvey Tyson (ed.); Johannesburg: Argus, 1987; pp. 134-146.

25. Akhalwaya interview.

26. Akhalwaya, pp. 15-16.

27. Interview with Irwin Manoim, co-editor of the Weekly Mail; January 1990.

28. Du Preez interview.

29. See for example details reported in the annual Race Relations Survey, (see note 1 above), and the newsletter of the Johannesburg-based Anti-Censorship Action Group.

30. See for example Gordon Jackson, "The secular and the sacred: a comparative study of the religious and daily press in South Africa." Unpublished PhD dissertation; Indiana University; 1983.

31. Pinnock, Don. "Popularize, organize, educate and mobilize: some reflections on South Africa's left-wing press in the 1980s." Paper presented to the Association for Sociology in South Africa, Johannesburg, July 1989; p. 9.

32. Akhalwaya, p. 16.

33. Of some twenty mainstream editors interviewed between August 1989 and January 1990, almost every one had high regard for the Weekly Mail.

34. Akhalwaya, p. 15.

35. Du Preez interview.

36. Interview with Sidley; September 1989.

37. Patel, p. 12.

38. See for example Anton Harber, "Finding the loopholes." *Index on Censorship*, 16:4 (April 1987): 22-24.

39. Akhalwaya interview.

40. Based on interviews with editors of these papers; only the *Weekly Mail* has audited figures, placing its circulation at about 28,000.

41. The Audit Bureau of Circulations figures for January-June 1989 reported *The Star's* average daily circulation as 218,350.

42. Barrell, p. 5.

43. Interview with Williams; October 1989.

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY:
AN ASSESSMENT

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South Africa's President F. W. de Klerk drew international acclaim for his speech in parliament on February 2 this year, in which he ended the ban on the African National Congress and other proscribed organizations[1] -- thus paving the way for Nelson Mandela's release from prison. Understandably overshadowed in his address, however, was his easing of the severe emergency restrictions that had curbed domestic and international news coverage of South Africa's troubles since the mid-1980s. De Klerk's announcement signalled the beginning of the end of what was unquestionably the darkest period in the history of the country's press. Then, a few months later, De Klerk ended the emergency in three of the country's four provinces.

But by then the harm was done. For nearly five years, the government's emergency powers over information, and the way it exercised them, subjected domestic and foreign media coverage to unambiguously authoritarian control. The question arises, therefore, how did the media regulations imposed during South Africa's state of emergency affect the press in that country? This paper seeks to address that issue.

The Chronology and Scope of the Regulations

Sustained and seemingly uncontrollable violence throughout South Africa in the mid-1980s led the government to declare a state of emergency on July 21, 1985.[2] This decree applied to 36 magisterial districts, covering the most turbulent parts of the country. These regulations were enacted primarily to facilitate swifter government action against dissidents than existing laws permitted. The security forces received "wide powers to detain, to search or to control movement and to promulgate further control orders in the affected areas. The exercise of each of these emergency powers had obvious implications for the gathering of news."[3] More important, though, were the regulations that specifically affected the control of information. These included a ban on reporting the names of any persons detained under the state of emergency, and on writing that could cause anyone "any harm, hurt or loss, whether to his person or to his property or in any other way."[4] The latter provision was aimed at anyone encouraging economic boycotts, for example, a popular protest technique.

The real problem for the media began on November 2, 1985, when President Botha proclaimed the first set of regulations specifically affecting the media.[5] These dealt mainly with bans on visual portrayals of unrest and police actions, curbs that drastically curtailed domestic and international news coverage. Aspects of these regulations were successfully challenged in court the next month, but the victory was shortlived -- for two reasons. The judgments were later overturned on appeal to the country's highest court, the Appeal Court. Also, the government issued new regulations closing the loopholes.

The November regulations were lifted along with the overall state of emergency in March 1986. This respite was shortlived, though, for just three months later President Botha announced another state of emergency, on June 12, 1986, applying to the entire country. The basic November regulations were included in the new emergency regulations.

The government turned to the National Press Union, which represents the main English and Afrikaans newspapers, and the disciplinary body it established, the Media Council, to help institute greater control in reporting of unrest. Before the government introduced further curbs in December 1986, it offered the NPU newspapers a deal: tone down your reporting of the unrest, through voluntary adherence to a stricter code of censorship implemented by the Media Council, and you will be spared the heavy hand waiting to descend on the alternative press. These papers, typically weeklies with small circulations that voice black concerns, are far more critical of the government. To their credit, the mainstream papers, through the NPU, rejected the offer.[6] Two days later, on December 11, additional regulations were promulgated, dealing specifically with the media by pulling together the media-related regulations already proclaimed and adding others.[7]

When newspapers began to carry advertisements calling for the unbanning of the ANC, the government responded in January 1987 with regulations that empowered the commissioner of police to ban reports or advertisements improving or promoting the image of illegal organizations. These regulations were overturned in court later that month, but the government promptly revised the regulations, thus closing the loopholes exposed in the court judgment.[8]

More regulations were overturned in court in April, but the legal challenges again presented little difficulty to the government. It closed these loopholes on June 11, 1987, when it renewed the state of emergency. At the same time, it reimposed most of the media regulations that had been gazetted earlier.

The final major media constraints came on August 28, 1987, with the proclamation of new censorship powers for the Minister of Home Affairs, who could stop publication of a paper for up to three months.

On June 10, 1988, the government again renewed the state of emergency, once more closing remaining loopholes. By then, the government must have regarded the media regulations as water-tight, because they were renewed virtually unchanged on June 9, 1989.

By this stage of their evolution, the regulations contained some notoriously sweeping provisions. One forbids any unauthorized photographic coverage of "unrest" or security response to such unrest. Nor may the media publish "subversive" statements without official consent. These concepts are defined extremely broadly in the regulations, which further empowered the authorities in effect to change the regulations on an ad hoc basis. Another provision requires not only that journalists may not report on unrest incidents; they are required to leave such situations immediately.

The restrictions are without parallel in South African history. Their scope astonished both South Africans long accustomed to Pretoria's fondness for ironfistedness, and the international community. The Observer, for example, described the November 1985 restrictions as "some of the most severe imposed in any country outside the Communist bloc."[9]

It was under these somber realities that the media in South Africa functioned for the latter half of the 1980s, the first reversal of this tide of constraints coming with De Klerk's concessions in parliament. He ended all the media restrictions except for the critically important prohibitions on television and photographic coverage.[10]

Impact of the Regulations

The emergency regulations bestowed immense power on the government to control the media and information. Without tackling the larger question of the validity of the emergency itself, at least three major issues concerning the media regulations bear mentioning here.

1. The government's ability to define and control news:

The regulations empower the government to control what may not be published without explicit permission or protection of privilege. Initially, the government's concern was to control the images of violence shown in domestic and international media. It was highly successful in this exercise, virtually cutting off media access to the unrest. For someone who might have obtained photographs or footage, there was the additional barrier of a steep fine or lengthy jail term for daring to share the material with the public.

But then, "From about December 1986 the focus shifted to preventing internal communication around campaigns of mass resistance."[11] As is evident from the numerous activities like strikes or boycotts that the media may not easily cover, the authorities are vitally concerned to stifle domestic dissent and protest by various means, including denying it publicity. In both cases, the target of the regulations is not incorrect or distorted information, the "propaganda" which the government insisted was the problem. Rather, it is accurate information that the state seeks to hide -- initially, in visual form, and then in written form too.

How these curbs are implemented is important. Invariably, decisions on what journalists may or may not cover are determined by the security authorities in a given situation. It is a police officer, then, rather than a reporter or photographer who determines what is appropriate material for tonight's news or tomorrow's front page. Journalism professor Gavin Stewart said after the November 1985 regulations came into force, "In most professions, the practitioners themselves decide who may practice, when, where and how. I wonder how my doctor would react if he was told he had to ask a policeman for permission to do his job."[12] Then he ponders the power of the Minister of Law and Order. "He clearly does not believe that mature journalists can be trusted with cameras. He apparently does believe that teenage policemen and soldiers armed with automatic weapons have the maturity to make decisions in South Africa's current socio-political climate."[13]

But it is not as if the government inflicted a total news blackout. While it prevented the media from covering much of the unrest, there was a great deal else it could say. In a particularly pernicious development, the government ensured that only its version of reality was portrayed. The Bureau of Information was established when the 1986 state of emergency was announced to provide news briefings for journalists. From early on, though, it was plain that the Bureau was neither equipped nor motivated to meet even the elementary needs of the media community.[14]

The police handed the responsibility of clearing and confirming information to the Bureau, which in turn said it was not there to clear information. Asked for help in understanding the complex regulations, the Bureau said its role was not to provide legal advice and told journalists to consult their lawyers. Because the Bureau's meetings were not privileged occasions, journalists were warned that "even questions they asked ... could land them in trouble with the emergency regulations."[15] Bureau briefings were disdainful of the media's needs, often providing information only long after events, and frequently inaccurately.[16] A former Newsweek correspondent in South Africa, who was deported during the emergency, described the briefings as consisting "mostly of government minions denying eyewitness reports of police violence."[17]

Elements of farce sometimes marked the briefings, such as the time a frustrated official announced, "I will not allow this news briefing to degenerate into a briefing for the dissemination of information."[18] Then, from June 24, 1986 the Bureau attained a new level of non-cooperation, and refused to answer questions unless they related to the day's briefing, or had been submitted four hours previously. Three months later, the exercise in futility mercifully ended when on September 25 the Bureau announced that it was closing its media center and would henceforth respond only to telex requests for information.[19]

This development did not mean an end to the government's management of the news, of course. The regulations still required approval for unrest-related news; the only difference was that the primary agency for granting it once again became the police.

By placing various clusters of newsworthy events in a journalistic never-never land, with reporters having to pretend that certain events have never occurred, coupled with the government's own monopoly on the facts and comments that could be provided in these areas, Pretoria made "itself the sole provider of news and comment on its own actions."[20] This dual process led to what one could call the "mushroom" approach to information control: keep them in the dark, and pile on the manure.

In describing the impact of the emergency regulations, it is easy to forget that only a relatively small part of South African life was immune to media coverage. The proscribed areas of coverage, however, were absolutely crucial to the political developments in South Africa. The taboo areas were precisely those that most dramatically affected the political opposition in the country. The government's claim that it was concerned only to stifle propagandistic and revolutionary rhetoric in the media was belied by banning coverage of strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience or protests against the system of military service. As Collinge et al put it, "Obviously these curbs do not relate in any way to 'terrorist' activity as [Home Affairs Minister] Stoffel Botha would like to suggest but to campaigns which have gained mass support in townships across the country."[21]

Some of the most significant events and trends helping to shape South Africa's future are thus off limits to the press, and hence to the public as well. Yet these are the very developments of which all South Africans should have knowledge if they are to make intelligent choices about their future.

2. Their abuse and selective application:

The regulations' deficiencies when viewed against Western legal norms, their impact on the government's news management, information, and the undermining of journalism were more than enough to discredit these measures at home and abroad. But even if these problems had not existed, the government's abuse and biased application of the regulations would by itself have brought them into total disrepute.

There is little doubt that the government never intended to apply the regulations even-handedly. As indicated earlier, the main targets were the alternative press and the foreign media -- especially broadcasters. When the August 1987 regulations were introduced, for example, the government made it known that they were specifically intended for use against the alternative press.[22] These and subsequent media regulations make no such distinction, and they apply equally to mainstream, alternative and foreign media. In taking action under the regulations, however, the government's main interest has lain with the latter two groups.

Government actions taken against journalists and newspapers, described in publications like the annual Race Relations Survey, the Anti-Censorship Action Group monthly newsletter, or the IPI Report show a strong preoccupation with steps against the alternative press. Countless actions have been taken against the mainstream publications too, especially English papers. Yet one would expect far more government activity against the mainstream papers. This is because the alternative press constitute only a few publications, employ far fewer journalists than mainstream papers, and appear less frequently. Two possible reasons account for the disparity. One is that because of their editorial slant, alternative papers are far more prone to falling foul of the regulations. This is certainly true. But by itself this cannot explain the disparity. A second reason is that when it comes to detecting possible violations of the regulations, the government reads the alternative press far more scrupulously than it does the mainstream papers. Starting with the assumption that these papers are the real "troublemakers" that deserve most attention, the government easily found occasion to prosecute alternative papers and their editors. How easily could it have done the same with the mainstream press? The answer lies partly in a study of one of the New Nation's encounters with the regulations.

The instance involved the use of the emergency regulations to suspend the paper for a three-month period in 1988. Gilbert Marcus provides a detailed analysis of the documentation on which Minister of Home Affairs Stoffel Botha based the suspension, the first under the regulations.[23] The Minister cited 21 articles which he said violated the regulations. Categories of problematic articles included "Fomenting revolution," "Promoting the breakdown of public order," "Fanning hatred toward the South African security forces," and "Promoting the image of an outlawed organization."

Marcus discusses several examples. A photograph of a man at the funeral of his nephew, an executed prisoner, carried a caption that read, "the battle is now on to save the thirty-one other activists presently on death row." The Minister regarded the photograph and caption as helping to foment revolution because it reinforced "the campaign with regard to the so-called patriots sentenced to death for deplorable capital offences linked with unrest and ANC terrorism."[24]

In the category concerning hatred toward the security forces, the Minister cited an advertisement signed by a group of West German Catholics. Besides calling for an end to political detentions, or the immediate trials of political prisoners, the advertisement urged the government "to abolish torture throughout the country."[25] The result, Botha said, was to engender hatred of the security forces because the advertisement suggested "that there is torture throughout the country" and was "made without any facts to substantiate it."[26]

The reasons Botha provided confirmed the fears that people had when the regulations were first introduced. Lawyers and academic experts "expressed alarm at the 'hypersensitive and politically paranoid attitude' adopted by Mr Botha in applying the restrictions...."[27]

The regulations allow a paper to make representations to the Minister. The New Nation did so, without effect, and the Minister soon took the next step in the elaborate process set up under the regulations: he issued a formal warning that he was considering closing the paper because he said it was continuing to publish propagandistic articles. He identified six stories that he said continued this trend.[28]

The paper's publishers then went to court to try to prevent the government from suspending the paper, but its application failed. Then, in March 1988 the government used the media regulations to silence the paper.

An editorial in The Star raised the question of the Minister's double standards when another black newspaper, the Sowetan, was warned that it faced closure. It said that most, if not all, the reports that the Minister objected to in the Sowetan would have appeared in pro-government papers like Beeld and The Citizen without troubling him. "In one publication," The Star said, "they are permissible; in another, seditious."[29] This problem of double standards was confirmed by Marcus, who said that many reports that Botha objected to in the New Nation case had apparently caused him no concern when they appeared in other papers.[30]

As it turned out, the Sowetan was not suspended, unlike its alternative press counterpart. New Nation's experience was shared by numerous other alternative publications. Other victims of suspension were the alternative publications Grassroots, New Era, South, and Weekly Mail.[31]

Besides providing for suspension, the emergency regulations also contained the lesser but nevertheless serious threat of prosecution for violating any of their numerous provisions. Here too the alternative papers got closest, but by no means exclusive, attention. What is curious, however, about the government's reliance on its powers to prosecute under the regulations is that they ignored them for the first few years of the emergency. Then, in mid-1989 came a flurry of activity. Within a short time, the Weekly Mail was facing two counts of violating the regulations by publishing details in 1987 on the circumstances and treatment of detainees, and the former editor of South, Rashid Seria, and the paper's publishing company were charged because of a May 1988 report on the success of a boycott in the schools. Vrye Weekblad faced six charges of undermining the system of military conscription.[32] Two former editors of the student newspaper at the University of Cape Town were also charged with publishing reports about school boycotts.[33]

The prosecutions represented a strategic shift in the government's application of the regulations. Now it turned to the courts to enforce them. When the Weekly Mail appeared in court on a charge under the regulations in August 1989, the trial was held in camera. The paper headlined its report on the court case by saying, "The Mail in court ... but we can't tell you why."[34] In terms of a provision under the general emergency regulations, no evidence in the trial of someone detained under the emergency may be released until the judgment is given.[35] In the report, the Mail wondered if the state would address two questions: "Why have more than two years been allowed to pass before prosecution? If the damage to state security was as great as the charge sheet alleges, why was swifter action not taken?"[36] These questions, as much as any other indicator, suggest that the government was quite brazenly invoking the emergency regulations in a "search and destroy" operation against its media critics.

It is not only actual prosecutions that present problems for the press. Police repeatedly launch investigations against papers, requiring them to give statements and spend extensive amounts of time with lawyers responding to police enquiries. At one time, the Natal Witness faced 17 charges under the regulations.[37] Investigations involving other publications have been conducted, most of them being dropped. Editors strongly suspect the government uses these regulations, together with investigations under the other acts, to harass their papers.

In actions against publications, the government has unquestionably directed its firepower primarily against the alternative press. But what of steps taken against journalists? Here too the pattern is the same, although not quite as pronounced. No one can estimate with any accuracy the number of incidents in which local and foreign journalists have been affected by the emergency regulations. Such incidents must run into their thousands. These are separate from the countless other actions taken against journalists under other powers at the government's disposal. The expulsion of eight foreign journalists in the first year and a half of the nationwide emergency included the BBC and New York Times correspondents. In addition, Stoffel Botha told Parliament on May 31, 1987 that in the preceding year 238 foreign journalists had been denied visas or not had them renewed[38] -- an example of an important government technique to regulate South Africa's image abroad used in conjunction with the emergency regulations.

3. The undermining of journalism:

From the practicing journalist's perspective, the most repugnant aspect of the media regulations is their frontal onslaught on the most fundamental tenets of good journalism. They force reporters, photographers and their organizations to practice the very antithesis of ethical journalism. Journalists are thwarted in their ability to seek and report accurately and completely what is occurring around them. They are forced to flee scenes of unrest, exactly the opposite of what a good journalist ought to do. More than merely repressing their instincts and suppressing what they know to be the truth, they are also knowingly and unavoidably co-opted into presenting the government's version of reality. Like a doctor who through some bizarre law is required to make people sick, the journalist who is forced to run from a story, suppress the truth or knowingly present distorted information is denying some of the most fundamental values on which journalism is based.

The regulations had other negative effects on journalists and the profession. One was on the morale of journalists. Stewart and Riddle found in a survey of editors and reporters that "A sense of defiant resignation characterised most of the interviews. The typical senior journalist sounds like a person living with a tumour: sometimes it hurts terribly; at any moment it might prove fatal, but most of the time it must be ignored so that life can go on."[39]

A recurring theme in reporters' comments is the frustration they have encountered under the media regulations. Stewart and Riddle found that many mainstream reporters covering sensitive stories practice considerable self-censorship, and that their sub-editors or editors adopt cautious approaches to stories that might violate the regulations.[40] The caution levels vary greatly from one mainstream paper to another, but the result for any reporter who has one story after another rejected by his or her superiors is frustrating indeed. A reporter on the Natal Mercury described the process: "You find yourself not writing stories that might create trouble because you know it's just such a lot of fuss. It's like an ongoing war.... Reporters here feel they are fighting the newspaper hierarchy."[41] Another, on the Eastern Province Herald, which faced several expensive government prosecutions in the mid-1980s, said: "There's probably the inclination now to stay safely within the law, whereas the inclination some years ago might have been to push the law to its limits."[42]

A Cape Times reporter described the situation at that paper as follows:

> Self-censorship is happening in the newsroom at two levels. Obviously, at the level of the emergency regulations one feels that one should rather temper one's own story rather than allow the newsdesk or the subs to do it. We are told to write as if the regs don't exist -- with the result that the stories get spiked or cut. If we do it ourselves we feel somehow we can get around the regs and get the story in the paper. At a more insidious level there is a strong belief in the newsroom that the paper ignores certain kinds of news relating to progressive political issues, the community, labour, extra-parliamentary politics. Some big names in extra-parliamentary politics get coverage. But the newspaper turns a blind, rather disparaging, eye to what is

happening on the ground in the factories and in the schools.[43]

The point about reporters being told not to censor themselves is important. Several papers have this policy, among them The Star. The difficulty is that it cannot work. A reporter on that paper observed that "Besides the cuts the editors make, reporters -- especially those who routinely deal with sensitive matters -- now know how to write their stories to get around these things.... The editor has stressed that we mustn't censor ourselves. But people are. They are doing it against strict instructions but it has become ingrained."[44]

The vagueness of the regulations made a clear and unified response by papers impossible. Complicating the effect of the regulations still further were regional differences, Stewart and Riddle reported. "We found some striking differences in the way the law affects different kinds of newspapers and different parts of the country. Newspapers in areas of relative calm believe they are able to tell most of the story. Those in areas of ongoing violence, like Natal and perhaps the Western Cape, believe they are severely restricted and the truth is severely distorted."[45]

No one doubts that the regulations have curbed what can be reported, in some cases seriously. But editors differ on the extent to which the regulations have undercut their papers' functions as monitors and reflectors of society. Some, like Richard Steyn, of the Natal Witness, believe their news coverage has been seriously curtailed by the proscriptions. He says, "We run into problems regularly with the emergency regulations." Steyn's paper has a reputation as one of the most aggressive and courageous dailies in its reporting, and he says that despite the regulations, "We're getting a lot out." He adds, though, "We're not telling the whole story; we can't tell the whole story."[46] Sharing his view is Kosie Viviers, editor of the Cape Times.

He describes the regulations' impact as "significant and very severe." Even more serious, in his view, is one of the many ripple effects the regulations have had. "Under the emergency the information networks that the newspapers had in the townships collapsed," he says.[47]

Beeld's editor, Salie De Swardt, warns against the danger of overstating the effect of the regulations. He says that their impact is less than many people think, especially outside the country. He estimates that only "five percent of our normal news flow is affected" by the regulations themselves, as distinct from the impact of other laws.[48]

Another danger of the regulations is that some papers or journalists are quietly grateful to use them as an excuse for their inadequate coverage. Denis Beckett, editor of the award-winning monthly magazine of political comment, Frontline, says, "If the state of emergency were lifted tomorrow, very few papers would look different the day after."[49] Most papers, he adds, use the regulations as an excuse and a shield for their incompetence and unwillingness to conduct the rigorous reporting that he says previously characterized the mainstream press.

His view is shared by several alternative press editors and journalists, who believe that their publications are generally far more willing to seek ways of getting around the regulations. Louise Flanagan, of the East London News Agency, says that despite the emergency, "The alternative press is more likely to make an effort to publish stories."[50] As a generalization her claim seems valid, but it is important to note that the mainstream papers, under a wide range of editors, take a correspondingly wide range of attitudes to the emergency regulations. Some show considerable courage and willingness to push the regulations to the limit; others, especially some smaller dailies, are complacent and far more inclined to follow the lead set by larger papers.

Speaking in the context of the various political pressures facing the English press, former Rand Daily Mail editor and now The Star's deputy editor-in-chief, Rex Gibson, says some papers have been cowed. But, he continues, "About 70 percent of the English press has met the challenge, and about 30 percent has become more timid." As for editors using the regulations as a shield, however, he says: "I don't get any impression that English editors have said, 'Thank God we don't have to take these decisions.'"[51]

A media scholar points to another facet of the "shield" role that the regulations can or do play for the mainstream press. He tells of an editor of a mainstream English daily, who mentioned his gratitude for the regulations and the rationale they provided for keeping some of his more radical reporters in line.[52] This remark symbolizes a gulf on many English papers between their senior and especially medium level editors, and the reporters. This split between reporters and management, a permanent and troubling quality of the English press, was notably widened by the pressures of the emergency.

Serious though this rift is on some papers, it could be far worse. The reason is that the government has come nowhere close to using the regulations to their fullest potential. Then again, it has not needed to, given some of the almost certainly unplanned results that the regulations had. Like the self-censorship and heightened internal tensions they fostered on newspapers, the regulations also damaged newspaper credibility. Jocelyn Kuper, an authority on newspaper marketing, says that "As long as there are media restrictions, newspapers will have credibility problems. It is not just the SABC which has a credibility problem. In conducting research on The Sowetan, we found that readers blamed the newspaper as much as the government for the media restrictions, because what they experience in their backyards is different to what they read in the newspapers."[53]

Press Response to the Regulations

Early on, the press mounted several direct legal challenges to the regulations. As noted earlier, these led to shortlived successes when the government won important court victories on appealing the initial rulings, or else simply refined the rules to close the loopholes. Another tactic was to highlight the effect the regulations had on their news coverage. Several papers ran notices telling readers that what they were reading was produced under the emergency restrictions, and continued doing so throughout the state of emergency. Until the government stopped them, many papers also published extensive blank spaces or blacked out text or photographs, indicating dramatically through self-censorship the large chunks of material of which their readers were now deprived. The practice amused one media critic, who referred to the example of the Weekly Mail. After the government suspended one issue in 1986, the paper "re-appeared in Morse Code, with liberal application of the kind of black strips Scope magazine uses to draw attention to the undesirable bits. Words are the nipples of the revolutionary ideologue, and it is the duty of any responsible society to protect the ignorant. Not to mention the illiterate."[54] The government found little amusing in the blank spaces and black strips, however, and wiped them out with the next round of regulations. The practice, according to Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok, "made the reader politically aware, and it aroused suspicion within the public that the State had sinister motives in hiding true facts."[55]

If the Minister thought that running blank spaces violated the spirit of the regulations, and had to be stopped, it was as well he did not apply equal zeal to enforcing the regulations in their entirety. In reality, from early on newspapers began testing the limits of the regulations, some more courageously than others. Gaps in the regulations were probed and prodded, and innovative attempts allowed the press to report stories that, in the context of the suffocating regulations, breathed unexpected puffs of information or understanding into the public arena. One tactic involved opposition members of parliament making statements under the protection of parliamentary privilege. Remarks which were otherwise banned suddenly became publishable, under the exemption the regulations themselves afforded. Another dealt with the publication of detainees' names. Papers discovered that when police informed detainees' families of their detention, this technically constituted official release of that information -- and was thus usable by the press.

Papers throughout the country repeatedly violated the rules, especially on more obviously newsworthy stories such as the annual stayaways on June 16, the anniversary of the unrest that began in Soweto in 1976. Breaking the regulations by covering a particular story is obviously more easily done when an editor knows most other papers are likely to cover the story. Decisions on whether to publish a story that probably breaks the regulations are highly subjective. In addition to whatever legal advice editors may have received, they will base their decisions to publish or not on such factors as the degree of perceived government hostility to one's paper, the current political climate, the likelihood of the story in question offending the authorities, and the relationship with the police in one's area.

The daily routine of editors and reporters consists of thinking about things other than the emergency, however. The Natal Witness's Steyn, says: "If you sat and worried about the emergency regulations you wouldn't get a paper out.... One gets sort of fatalistic."[56] And Andrew Drysdale, of The Argus, says: "One has to live with it. We don't go around muttering the numbers of the rules; we have to get on with producing a newspaper."[57]

Yet it is the "routinization" of the media regulations that poses another threat to the press. Having lived with the regulations for several years it becomes easier and easier to accustom oneself to them, and to tire of seeking loopholes to exploit. With the passage of time, elements in the government have also greatly welcomed the added powers and convenience the regulations have given them. The editor of the largest Afrikaans daily, Beeld, Salie De Swardt, said he was "concerned that the rules worked so well that the government would want to keep them."[58]

It is therefore all the more encouraging to note the partial dismantling of the media regulations under the De Klerk administration. For the rules had worked well in attaining the government's primary objectives of stifling international and domestic portrayals of political violence, and depriving the internal political forces of media coverage of their actions. But at what price?

Conclusion

This paper has described the origin, scope and implications of the media regulations. Just as these regulations cannot be seen apart from the general emergency regulations, nor can the toll that each set of restrictions has taken be separately identified. Together, though, there is no doubt that the regulations further dented the rule of law, and aggravated Pretoria's already abysmal image among many at home and abroad as an authoritarian government that cared little for human rights. More importantly though, the media regulations inflicted incalculable harm on the country's long-term interests. Marcus's remarks in this connection are apposite:

> The wisdom and efficacy of the use of emergency powers to silence opposition is questionable. Heavy-handed security measures cannot bring lasting security. Indeed, they appear to be accompanied by the reverse: an escalating intensity of violence. Security is more fundamentally ensured by political, social and economic measures which are equitable and offer all South Africans a stake in their futures.
>
> ... Television footage of brutal security force action (which South Africans are precluded from seeing) have [sic] attracted justifiable outrage and condemnation from foreign governments. The perverse solution was not to curb security force excesses but to stifle the messenger. The clamps on reporting have also had the effect of lulling white South Africa into a false sense of complacency by creating the impression that order has been restored to the townships. Those who live in the townships know better and no amount of censorship can ever remove the harsh reality of their conditions of existence.[59]

Once again, the government had responded to a crisis of dissent by addressing symptoms rather than causes, leaving the condition of the body politic to deteriorate still further. This only made more difficult and complex the healing process that, sooner or later, would have to be tackled. When the De Klerk administration took office, and gave several indications of desiring a new dispensation for South Africa, it had still to deal with the legacy of the emergency regulations -- and the price they exacted.

Another part of that price deserving special mention is the long-term harm done to press freedom in particular, and civil liberties generally. The length of the emergency, plus its scope, further numbed a society already steeped in secrecy, silence and censorship as the normal operating procedure for much of South Africa's public life. The curbs on free expression are so severe, and have accumulated over so many years, that South Africa can without exaggeration be regarded as a closed rather than an open society. The media regulations merely aggravated an already grim feature of South African society.

Reversing this impetus toward secrecy and government control of information is inordinately difficult. The apparent will on the government's part to begin undoing the damage that the regulations had inflicted is of course to be welcomed. Assuming this commitment is genuine, and that the government is not deflected from its course, it is impossible to predict how far the De Klerk administration might move the country toward a culture of openness.

South Africa entered the 1990s with the media regulations modified, but still in force. It does so at a time when South Africans most need to know what is happening in their country, and ought to be exposed to the full range of ideas contesting for political recognition. Pleading the crisis of the times did little to justify imposing the media regulations beginning in 1985, especially not in the form they took and the way they were applied. Now, five years later, with South Africa having irrevocably entered a new political era, even the modified media regulations are an untenable curb on political discourse.

President John Kennedy once said, "We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is afraid of its people."[60] This fear of its own people, perhaps more than anything else, characterized the South African government's tragic decision to usher in the dark years of the media emergency regulations.

Dark though these times were, they were not without scattered shafts of light. Through the media at home and abroad, or through informal channels of communication, South Africans who wanted to know still learned what was happening in their country. And, in the end, the unpleasant facts, the foreign ideas, the alien philosophies and the competitive values will all still be there when the state of emergency is merely an ugly memory.

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